



A RATS TALE





A Rat's Tale

When a collection of rare books disappears from a wealthy landlord's vault, adventurers are dispatched to sleuth out the thief and bring the tomes back home. But perhaps some knowledge is better buried than claimed...

A collection of four 1 hour adventures for Tier 1 Characters. Optimized for APL 3.

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Adventure Primer

Background

In the late 15th Century DR, **HILLSFAR** was divided, ruled by a senate of 31 wealthy merchants and guildmasters. Rarely able to agree on anything, the senate was ineffectual and weak.

In this vacuum of power, one of these senators, **TOMAS WOODRUE**, saw an opportunity in the charismatic Red Plume Commander **TORIN NOMERTHAL**. He threw all of his political clout behind Nomerthal, and rallied other senators to his cause, supported by a platform of reinstating Hillsfar's Great Law of Humanity: only humans are allowed in Hillsfar. Nomerthal was soon raised to First Lord, and using the 1487 crash of the Netherese City of Thultanthar upon Myth Drannor as an excuse, they executed the remaining Shadovar. With the elven powers of Myth Drannor all but destroyed, they then began the second great purge of nonhumans from Hillsfar, cultivating a manic xenophobia among the human cities.

However, brave adventurers helped strip Torin from power during the Rage of Demons, replacing him with First Lord Vuhm Yestral, and Hillsfar, though still a harsh place for nonhumans, once again struck down the Great Law of Humanity.

But though Torin Nomerthal fell, his legacy lived on. The people of the city are still largely xenophobic, and his supporters, like Tomas Woodrue, maintained much of their wealth and power. Woodrue himself used the chaos in Hillsfar during the Rage of Demons and the First Lord's fall from grace to purchase buildings all across town at low prices — from the dead, widowed, and orphaned, from those who left the city for safer ground, and from those whose businesses went under as a result of the demonic panic. He then retired comfortably to an elegant walled manse within the city, growing fat off his incomes from tenants in his various buildings.

Using that wealth, he grew his collection of rare artifacts and tomes, most of which catalogue the great deeds of humanity, or are written from a human perspective. But now, the entire collection has disappeared from his vault, and he is offering a great bounty to whoever can return it to him and bring him the head of the thief who took it.

Episodes

The adventure's story is spread over four **mini-adventures** that take approximately 1 hour to play. Each of these episodes is introduced by a Call to Action Episode.

If you're planning to play the entire adventure at once, you only need to introduce the **Call to Action** once. However, if you plan to play them over several sessions, you'll want to revisit the **Call to Action** each time you play.

- **Episode 1: Call to Action.** Tomas Woodrue, a now-retired former Hillsfar Senator who helped Torin Nomerthal gain power through pro-human propaganda, puts out a call for adventurers to bring him the head of the thief who stole his prized collection of rare books and items!
- **Episode 2: Drowning in Muck.** The adventurers search the ex-senator's vault. They find a passage there to the city sewers that leads them through traps and peril to a clue as to how the heist was pulled off. Completing this episode completes **Story Objective A**.
- **Episode 3: If it Ain't Rough it Ain't Right.** While meeting with a half-orc with a possible lead, the party finds themselves caught in the middle of a tavern brawl. Completing this episode completes **Story Objective B**.
- **Episode 4: A Friend in Greed.** The adventurers meet with an unsavory character in hopes of learning more information, but their informant has other problems. Completing this episode completes **Story Objective C**.
- **Episode 5: A Rat in a Trap.** The adventurers piece together the clues and confront the thief at last! Completing this episode completes **Story Objective D**.

Episode Sequence

Depending on your time constraints, play style and environment, this adventure series takes approximately four hours to play from beginning to end.

How Will You Play?

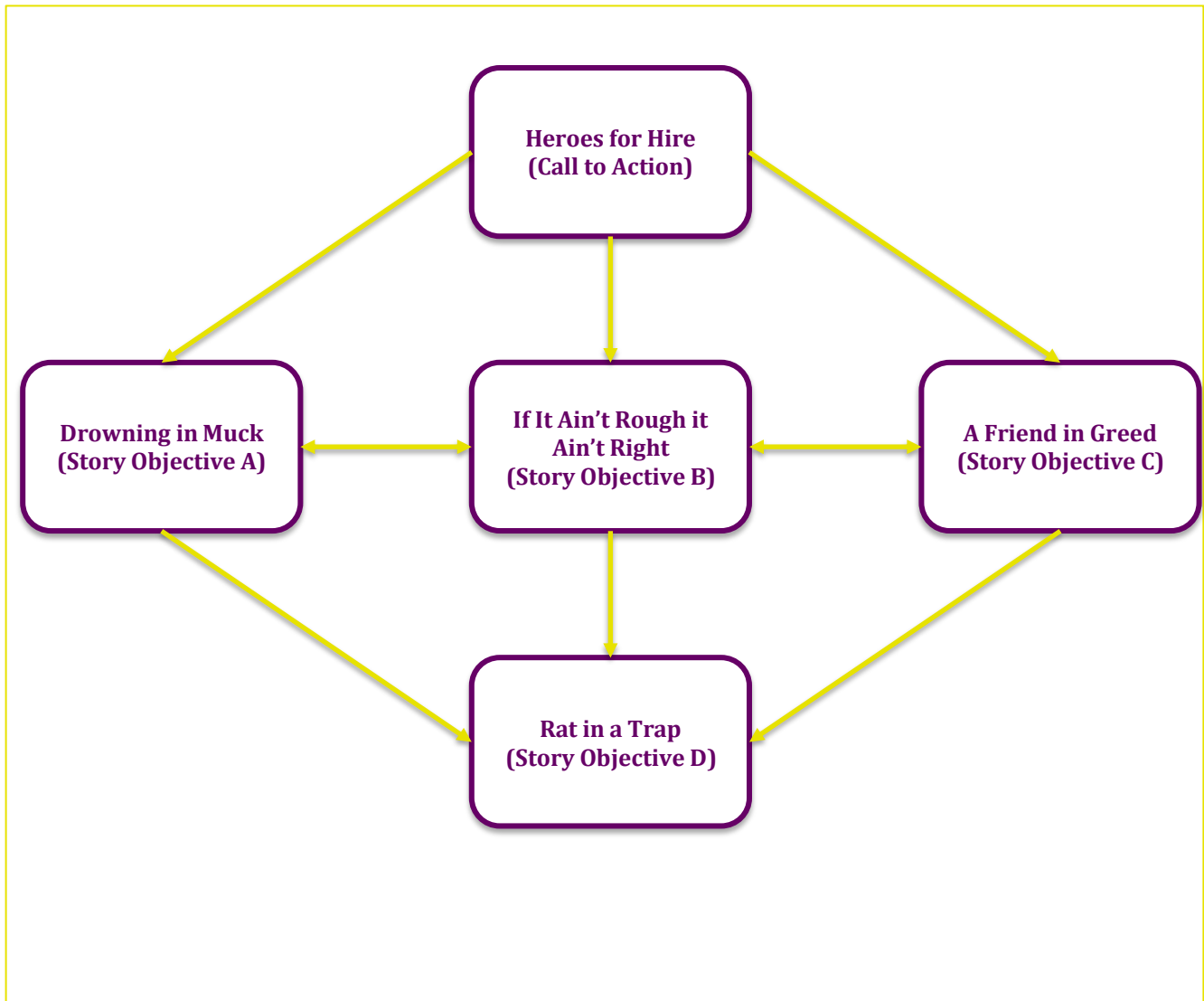
The duration of your session depends on how much of this adventure you utilize. At the very least, your session will last approximately 1 **hour**, if you are only playing one of the adventures. However, if you wish, you can provide a longer experience for your players by utilizing the **complete series**.

One Adventure Only. To complete a single adventure, the players need only play **Episode One: Call to Action** and any one of the other episodes.

Complete Series. You can extend this adventure by **up to three hours** by running **Episode One: Call to Action** followed by **Episodes Two** through **Four** in any order, finishing with **Episode 5: A Rat in a Trap**.

Episode Flowchart

This section provides a basic understanding of not only the flow of the adventure, but also the outline of the different paths that your players may take in reaching their stated objective.



Episode 1: Heroes for Hire

Estimated Duration: 10 Minutes

Look, Which Crook Took My Books?

In this scene, we pick up with the adventurers having already answered a summons from an incredibly wealthy former senator of Hillsfar, **Tomas Woodrue**, and have been brought to his manse within the city of Hillsfar as potential hires. His priceless collection of books, art, and historical artifacts was stolen the night before, and he wants someone to bring it back. We begin the scene in a garden within the walls of Woodrue's manse. Below are a few reasons they might have accepted the summons.

- **You Scratch My Back...** Woodrue, though retired, is still a powerful man. He holds a lot of clout with the city's elite, is the landlord for a large number of houses and other buildings in the city, and has a great deal of influence in the Red Plumes. Your character might be looking to curry some favor with this powerful man.
- **The Mind Needs Books Like a Sword Needs a Whetstone.** Woodrue's collection of rare books and texts is legendary. Who knows what treasures might reside within? By helping him out, you could get a chance to peek at some of these tomes.
- **Stop, You Violated the Law!** Woodrue has a lot of pull with the Red Plumes. He often "purchases" prisoners from them, offering the prisoners a chance to earn a pass on their crimes, just this once, if they complete some "community service" for him. You are one such prisoner.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The garden is a beautiful green yard, well kept and maintained. It is dominated by a golden statue of a Wizard, right arm outstretched with palm up, left arm raised to the sky in a fist. The inscription reads "Maalthiir, First Lord and Savior to Hillsfar." The hedges are trimmed to look like rows of Red Plume Soldiers saluting the statue.

Lighting. The area is brightly lit by the sun hanging overhead.

Creatures/NPCs

Tomas Woodrue, a human **commoner** is here when the characters arrive. A morbidly obese man with pigs' eyes and fat cheeks, Tomas has a huge white belly poking out from beneath his rich velvet

doublet. Gemstone rings adorn each of his fingers, and heavy gems hang from his ears, weighing the earlobes down almost to his shoulders. He has crooked yellow teeth and a clean-shaven face crowned by a shiny bald head. It seems when the characters arrive that he has set out a feast to welcome them, but judging by the placement of the setting relative to everyone's seat, a second look would lead to the conclusion that the food is all for him — a theory supported by the variety of sauces and crumbs about the corners of his lips and staining his doublet.

Objectives/Goals. Woodrue wants his collection returned and the thief killed. He wants the burglar's head returned to him. He is willing to offer promises of political favors, access to his library, and even forgiveness of past minor crimes in Hillsfar to those who have them. He'd also like a human to get the credit for the recovery, if possible, though he may not say as much.

What Does He Know? Last night he was robbed, he knows that much. He hasn't found any signs of breaking and entering, and all the doors were properly locked. He has three leads, each of which leads to a different 1-hour adventure:

- **Episode 2: Drowning in Muck.** Woodrue will allow the adventurers to search the crime scene — an impenetrable vault below the Manse. Completing this episode completes **Story Objective A**.
- **Episode 3: If it Ain't Rough it Ain't Right.** A half-orc by the name of Kaldur came by his manse three days ago, asking about rare books in his collection. The servants said he left in a huff, cursing, after being turned away. According to his contacts, the half-orc is a drunkard, and spends most of his time at the Rat's Nest, a tavern in the city. He should be interrogated. Completing this episode completes **Story Objective B**.
- **Episode 4: A Friend in Greed.** One of Woodrue's business associates, a human male called Sivon Nekho, found one of Woodrue's books. He offered to meet with someone in Woodrue's employ to discuss specifics. Completing this episode completes **Story Objective C**.

If you are planning on running only Episode 5, then Woodrue has already sent teams on each of the

previous missions, and as such found a window in the vault that wasn't there before leading into the sewers, discovered the chest full of strange patches (including a rowboat, a ladder, and an window that looks suspiciously like the new one in the vault), learned the description of the thief from Kaldur, and identified the location of the alley where Irena Littleknight found the book. He can inform the characters of all these developments.

Treasure & Rewards

Tomas keeps a very wide collection of books and tomes, offers the following to those who help him:

- **Spell Scroll of Heroism.** If the characters help Woodrue track down one or more clues (that is, if they successfully complete Episodes 2, 3, or 4) he grants them a "Writ of Heroic Action," an official-looking document naming them heroes of Hillsfar and upholders of the law. This Writ can be used once as a **Spell Scroll of Heroism**, after which it holds no power, magical or legal, but is a proud honor nonetheless.
- **Spellbook.** If the characters bring the thief to justice (that is, if they successfully complete Episode 5), Woodrue grants them with a leather bound spellbook with gilt page edges and golden text titled "Ruminations on the Accomplishments of Humanity." If Woodrue finds himself facing the First Lord's justice as a result of Episode 5, the authorities allow the party to take this spellbook as their "finder's fee" for turning him in. This spellbook contains the following Wizard spells, each of which has notes on its origin attributed (whether correctly or not) to a famous human Wizard:

1st Level: *charm person, comprehend languages, snare*

2nd Level: *hold person, suggestion*

Call to Action

Woodrue is very enthusiastic to have adventurers working for him, though a bit less so about any non-humans in the party. He won't say as much straight out, but he will make it clear in more subtle ways.

- The objective of this adventure is to determine what has happened to Woodrue's prized collection and bring the culprit to justice.
- It might be, during the course of the adventure, that the players uncover Woodrue's own illegal dealings. If they do, they might choose to turn him over to the city of Hillsfar to face justice as well.

Episode 2: Drowning in Muck (Story Objective A)

Estimated Duration: 50 Minutes

Scene A. The Vault

In this episode, the adventurers investigate the scene of the crime, finding clues that lead them to a secret hideout in the sewers.

Prerequisites

Run this scene if the adventurers chose to investigate the crime scene after their meeting with Tomas Woodrue during the Call to Action.

Story Objective A

Determining how the thief got into the vault is **Story Objective A**. The investigations lead them to the sewers through a mysterious door in the vault, and in the sewer they find the clue.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The Vault is a 30' by 20' room stocked with empty bookshelves. Not a single wall is uncovered by some shelf or other.

Lighting. When the party enters, the vault is in total darkness. As they enter, a servant Woodrue assigned to bring them down lights several torches, making the vault brightly lit.

The Window That Wasn't. A window is hidden behind one of the bookshelves on the northern end of the east wall. It has a very pretty view of the sewage beyond. The window can be easily opened

and climbed through by medium or smaller creatures.

Creatures/NPCs

Rizzo is a jumpy, well-dressed human servant (**Commoner**) that Woodrue has assigned to lead the party down into the vault, and, if they have any nonhumans in the party, to stick with them until they come back up to make sure they don't do any further damage. He's a frightful, paranoid little rat-like man with hunched shoulders from too much time spent over a writing desk, a long, pointed nose, and thin hair held back with too much grease. A wispy mustache dusts his upper lip, and a severe overbite has given him the nervous habit of constantly chewing on his lower lip, leaving it raw and peeling.

Objectives/Goals. If the party is made up entirely of humans (unlikely), Rizzo's only role is to aid them as they wish it. If there are any non-humans in the group, however, he has been ordered to stay with them and keep a close eye on them to ensure they aren't involved with the thief or anything else unsavory.

What Does He Know? Rizzo was serving as Woodrue's seneschal when he first acquired this manse. As such, he knows the original layout of the room.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

None. Rizzo simply flees upstairs if attacked, and his master summons the city watch to have the party thrown out.

EXPLORATION

Succeeding on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) Check reveals that the dust in front of one of the bookcases is disturbed, as though it had been pushed out of its place recently. If an adventurer fails the check, the group eventually finds the window, but only after ten minutes of searching.

SOCIAL

Rizzo can confirm that wizards were brought down to look for any signs that teleportation had occurred in the vault. They found none.

Scene B. The Sewer Tunnel

In the sewers of Hillsfar, the adventurers deal with traps and peril while following the trail of the thief

Prerequisites

Run this scene if the adventurers climbed through the window and into the sewers.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The sewer tunnels are twenty feet wide, and raised stone columns support five foot wide wooden walkways on either side of the tunnel against the wall. The ceiling is ten feet above the walkways, and between them is a river of running sewage, one foot below the walkways and five feet deep. The passage turns in two directions, but footprints which can be found in the muck on the walkway with a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check lead south to a squat wooden post hammered clumsily into the walkway. A length of rope hangs from the post into the sewage.

Lighting. The sewer is in total darkness.

Creatures/NPCs

Timfred is a heavyset **rat** with a friendly disposition, the corners of his mouth always seeming

to be drawn up into a smile. This is because the thief, **Garth Rey**, also known as the Grey Rat, regularly feeds him. Timfred assumes the party to be Garth's friends (since he's the only one who ever comes through here) and sniffs about them curiously rather than scurrying away, expecting them to give him food. Timfred styles himself as a master gangster. To hear him tell it, he "runs this town, see." In truth, he is just an everyday rat, but Grey Rat's regular "payments" of food ("protection money") have convinced him he's a big shot.

Objectives/Goals. Timfred wants some food. Getting food is good, not getting food is bad.

What Does He Know? If the adventurers have a way to communicate with him, Timfred can identify the thief (who he calls "big friend-o") as one of his "cronies," the self-styled "Grey Rat." He knows that the Grey Rat sailed away to the south on a "huge pirate ship" to his "basement" where he keeps all his "toys." Timfred can even lead them there if they want, since he assumes the adventurers to be Grey Rat's friends. He knows that Grey Rat has a second lair called "the attic," but he doesn't know where that is.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

Well-equipped and well-prepared adventurers might be able to overcome and slay Timfred. If they do, shame on them.

EXPLORATION

Once the adventurers pick a direction to follow, the passages continue basically along one path. After ten minutes wandering to the north, it becomes clear the trail has gone cold, and the adventurers must take an additional ten minutes headed back to where they came. Spending ten minutes headed to the south leads them to a ramshackle dock where a small rowboat moors.

SOCIAL

If the characters have access to a way to communicate with him, Timfred is an invaluable ally, and can help lead them through the dangers of the sewers, but it will cost them some food. Information doesn't come cheap when you're dealing with seedy underworld masterminds.

Scene C. “The Basement”

Deeper in the sewers, the adventurers run into trouble.

Prerequisites

Run this scene if the adventurers traveled south for ten minutes, whether by following Timfred, discovering the footprints, or through pure dumb luck.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The sewer tunnels remain the same size as before, but here, on the east wall of the tunnel, is a large (10 foot wide) set of iron doors that reach to the ceiling.

Lighting. The sewer is in total darkness.

The Boat. A small rowboat is moored on the opposite side of the tunnel to a small post similar to the one the adventurers saw just outside the window.

Behind the Door

The door isn't locked, but behind it is a perfectly square pit, exactly 10 feet deep with walls exactly 20 feet wide with a 10-foot ladder leading down into it. A second, 14-foot ladder leans against the wall on the other side, leading to nowhere. At the bottom of the pit sits an oaken chest, a small bedroll, and a squat table. A steel mirror hangs on the east wall.

The Trapped Ladder

The rungs of the ladder into the pit is coated with a fine crystalline dust, visible to anyone with a Passive Perception of 13 or higher.

Touching the Dust. Anyone who descends the ladder begins to feel their body go rigid and their joints lock up a few moments later. An affected creature must make a DC 15 constitution saving throw or become paralyzed for one minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the beginning of each of its turns, freeing itself on a success. The trap's effects don't set in until a few moments after the dust has made contact with skin. If the players head down the ladder one after the other, the first person down feels its effects once the second person reaches the halfway point on the ladder.

Disabling the Trap. A creature who is aware of the presence of the dust can mix up a concoction to render it inert by making a DC 13 wisdom (herbalism kit) check as an action. A creature

without an herbalism kit can substitute proficiency in the nature skill instead, but doing so imposes disadvantage on their ability check.

Creatures/NPCs

The chest is actually a **mimic** the Grey Rat has named Marigold. One of the few of her kind to have developed greater cunning, Marigold can understand a little of the common tongue, though she can't speak it. She is a loyal friend to the Grey Rat, and defends his treasure in exchange for meat. If the party took twenty minutes or less to arrive here from the Vault, Marigold is asleep and only awakes if someone tries to touch her or if the party makes a significant amount of noise. If they took more than twenty minutes, she is awake. Marigold attacks as soon as one or more of them becomes paralyzed, if awake, or the moment a creature touches her, if asleep. If he came with the party, **Timfred** might also be present.

Objectives/Goals. Marigold wants to protect her buddy's treasure from interlopers, and stops at nothing to do it. Timfred, if present, has likely been convinced to help the adventurers. He wants them to survive and get whatever Marigold is hiding. He doesn't trust Marigold, and wouldn't mind if the players took out this “rogue agent.”

What Does She Know? Marigold is a simple predator, but she knows that the items she stores hold great value to Grey Rat. She doesn't really understand why. Timfred can warn the party about both Marigold and the “grabby sand.”

Treasure & Rewards

A few interesting items are stored here:

- **The Table.** A carpenter's kit rests on the table, alongside a note which reads “*Littleknight has the ledger. Paid in full. You just need to set a meeting. The word is “flumph. Good luck.”*” It isn't signed, but the parchment does bear wax pressed with the signet of a ram's skull run through by a spear.
- **The Chest.** The chest contains a rudimentary sewing kit and a set of strange clothing patches which (judging by the loose threading on the backs) seem to have been torn from some piece of clothing. Their designs vary, including several black squares, one depicting a set of heavy iron doors, one a simple window, one a wooden ladder, one a rowboat, and two simple windows. A DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check (or a casting

of *identify*) can identify these as similar to patches from a *Robe of Useful Items*, but with no magical properties. A DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check can further intuit that the owner must have tried in vain to sew patches of their own to add to such a robe. Judging by their placement here, it doesn't seem to have worked, but the owner hasn't given up trying.

Wrapping up the Episode

The patches the adventurers found match closely with the rowboat, ladder, window, and iron doors they've run across so far, and the adventurers might have pieced out by now what happened: The Grey Rat used a window patch from a *Robe of Useful Items* to create an entrance into the vault from the sewers, climb in, and steal its treasure. If they haven't put it together, as is especially likely with new players, Tomas can immediately identify the patches upon returning to him, and is furious that someone with access to such "base magics" could penetrate his vault. He thanks the party for their help —

graciously towards any humans, and a bit more coldly towards any non-humans. With this discovery, the adventurers have completed **Story Objective A**.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Creatures who fail their saving throw against the dust become grappled rather than paralyzed, and the **Mimic** only has 36 hit points.
- **Weak:** Creatures who fail their saving throw against the dust become restrained rather than paralyzed.
- **Strong:** The **Mimic** gains the following action: **Multiattack**. The Mimic may make one pseudopod attack and one bite attack.
- **Very Strong:** The **Mimic** has 90 hit points and gains the following action: **Multiattack**. The Mimic may make one pseudopod attack and one bite attack.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

Marigold can be a tough challenge for many adventuring parties. She is clever enough to focus on paralyzed characters, but not clever enough to continue attacking characters who are unconscious, even if she has previously seen them return to consciousness.

EXPLORATION

An adventurer that manages to get to the bottom of the pit without waking the mimic and examines the chest notices that in place of a lock hangs a small brass tag reading "Marigold."

SOCIAL

The adventurers might be able to convince Marigold that they are friends of Grey Rat's, and talk her into handing over the items she's storing. Any character can make a Charisma (Deception) check as an action. Subtract half the result from Marigold's HP, as her willingness to fight wanes and she becomes convinced the party are her friends. If Marigold is reduced to 0 hit points in this manner, she doesn't die, but instead opens her mouth and presents her contents to the adventurers on a sticky blue tongue.

Adventure Rewards

At the end of the session, the characters each receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. These rewards include advancement and treasure, and may include player rewards—magic item unlocks, story awards, or new downtime activities, as follows:

Advancement and Treasure Checkpoints

The characters receive **1** advancement checkpoint and **1** treasure checkpoint for each **story** objective that they complete, as follows:

- **Story Objective A:** Determine the thief's method of entry into the vault.

Dungeon Master Rewards

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn **advancement and treasure checkpoints** and downtime as though you played the adventure, but none of the adventure's **player rewards**.

However, this adventure may qualify for rewards earned by completing DM Quests. See the *ALDMG (Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide)* for more information about DM Quests.

Appendix 1: Locations & NPCs

The following NPCs and locations feature **prominently** in this adventure.

- **Tomas Woodrue (TOH-mas WUHD-row).** Tomas is the archetypal member of a bloated aristocracy, a relic of a bygone era. He clings to the Great Laws of Hillsfar, despite their irrelevance in the modern era. In this adventure, he wants revenge on the thief who stole his prized collection, and to have that collection returned to him. He also wants to profit off of the suffering of non-humans.

Quote: *"Silence, little gnome. The grownups are talking. And while you're at it bring me another leg of lamb!"*

Personality: *If you do me an injury, I will crush you, ruin your name, and salt your fields.*

Ideal: *Purity. Hillsfar should belong to those who made it great: humans.*

Bond: *My prized collection of rare tomes means more to me than the world.*

Flaw: *I take joy in flexing my power over others.*

- **Timfred (TIM-frid).** A rat of many delusions, Timfred thinks himself a master criminal. As far as he's concerned, the adventurers look like great patsies... and maybe they've got some edible gold on them...

Quote: *"Xanathar who? Sounds like a punk."*

Personality: *I would rather make a new friend than a new enemy.*

Ideal: *Greed. I do whatever it takes to stay on top.*

Bond: *My big friend-o Grey Rat is my number one guy.*

Flaw: *I have wild delusions of grandeur and often overestimate my own station.*

Appendix 2: Creature Statistics

Commoner

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10 (no armor)

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Actions

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

Mimic

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	5 (-3)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +5

Damage Immunities acid

Condition Immunities prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages –

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Shapechanger. The mimic can use its action to polymorph into an object or back into its true, amorphous form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Adhesive (Object Form Only). The mimic adheres to anything that touches it. A huge or smaller creature adhered to the mimic is also grappled by it (escaped DC 13). Ability checks made to escape this grapple have disadvantage.

False Appearance (Object Form Only). While the mimic remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary object.

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

Actions

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 +3) bludgeoning damage. If the mimic is in object form, the target is subjected to its adhesive trait.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage.

Rat

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 10 (no armor)

Hit Points 1 (1d4 - 1)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages –

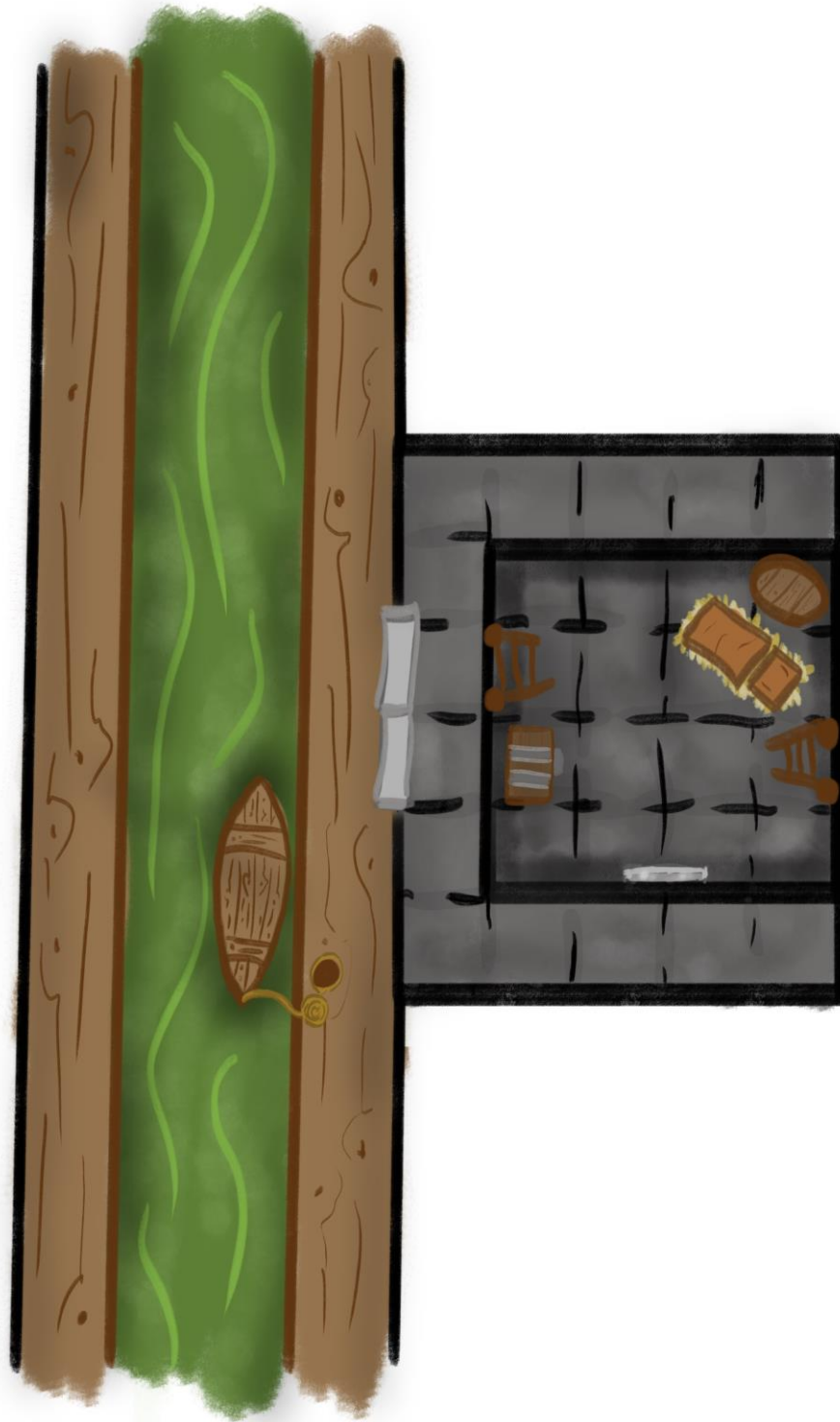
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Keen Smell. The rat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) Checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

Appendix 3: "The Basement" Map



Appendix 4: Dungeon Master Tips

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

New to D&D Adventurers League?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/playevents/organized-play>

To DM an adventure, you **must** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character whose level is within the adventure’s level range. Characters playing in a **hardcover** adventure may continue to play to but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they **can’t return** to the first one if they’re outside its level range.

Preparing the Adventure

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you’d like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you’d like to portray an NPC or a tactic you’d like to use in a combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure’s appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you’d like to use to aid you in running this adventure—such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master, but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character’s adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer). The players fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for advancement and treasure checkpoints, downtime days, and renown. These values are updated at the conclusion of the session.

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Determining Party Strength

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

Episode 3: If it Ain't Rough it Ain't Right (Story Objective B)

Estimated Duration: 50 Minutes

Scene A. The Rat's Nest

In this episode, the adventurers seek out a possible suspect and find themselves embroiled in a tavern brawl.

Prerequisites

Run this scene if the adventurers chose to visit the Rat's Nest in search of the half-orc Kaldur.

Story Objective B

Eliminating Kaldur as a possible suspect and getting a description of the thief from him constitutes **Story Objective B**.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The Rat's Nest is a rough-and-tumble dockside tavern with enough tables to comfortably seat twenty patrons. It's a bit grimy, a bit run-down, and a bit seedy, but it's a well-enough spot to have a pint, if you don't mind a brawl breaking out every now and then.

Lighting. The Rat's Nest is dimly lit by low-burning torches. There is only one window to let in the sunlight, and that's boarded up.

The Cage. The center of the tavern is dominated by a ten-foot diameter circular cage where fights are often held. Though currently empty, the floor on the inside (and in some parts just around) the cage is covered in filthy stains.

Creatures/NPCs

The place isn't too crowded at the moment — only a handful of townsfolk (one for each player character), mostly poor non-humans (**commoners**) are here drinking, gambling, and conversing. Here and there a raucous drinking song breaks out. Then there's **Kaldur** (a **Berserker**), who would stand out in any crowd, sitting at the bar. A tanned colossus of a half-orc standing nearly seven feet tall, his barrel chest-bared by an unlaced shirt of undyed burlap — is crossed with scars in every direction. A rough, close-cut beard covers his cheeks, and his long, thick hair is worn dreadlocked and tied back. He seems constantly grim, his face twisted in a near-permanent scowl. Kaldur is one of the regular fighters in the Cage, which he's found is one of the only places in Hillsfar that a half-orc can find easy work. To make matters

worse for him, he's unlettered. He fought alongside a number of heroes during the Rage of Demons, and even served in Knight-Paladin Nullius's company at Yulash, but now that the Rage is over, the world's passed him by. When not with his son, Jahl, he waits at the Rat's Nest hoping one of the employees won't show for the day so that he can pick up a shift and make a little extra.

Objectives/Goals. Kaldur does anything he can to help his son have a better life than he's known himself. He tries to set a good example for his son, and refuses to drink, curse, lie, or break any laws, always trying to do the right thing - even when his son's not around. Most importantly, he doesn't want his son to have to fight for coin like his dad. In general, he has a soft spot for kids, and keeps them safe whenever possible. Beyond that, he just wants to stay out of trouble and be left alone. The rest of the people present just want to blow off some steam.

What Do They Know? Kaldur had visited Tomas Woodrue in the hopes of paying to borrow some books that might help with his son's schooling. He was turned away, but that's for the best, since he managed to purchase those same books a few days later anyhow for cheaper than he was going to borrow them for. He doesn't know anything about a theft, but he might be willing to give a description of the person he bought from, if the party can impress him. The seller was just a kid, an elf maybe seventeen years old, with a mop of brown hair and a big grey rain-cloak. Wiry kid, too — looked like he could be blown over with a puff of wind, but he moved with some spring in his step. He had a freckly face, a round nose, and a big smile full of uneven teeth - a kid with a lot of future ahead of him. The rest of the townsfolk don't know anything about the situation.

Impressing Kaldur

Though your players might come up with other options, Kaldur's suggestion for resolving the scene involves the party playing a game of Dragondung against Kaldur. This can play out one of three ways, depending on your group's preferences and your time constraints.

Ability Checks. The simplest option is to have all involved characters roll a Charisma (Gaming Set) check and a Wisdom (Insight) check. Kaldur rolls neither. Whoever rolls the highest on the first roll is the winner of the game. Whoever rolls the highest on the second roll notices that Kaldur has called “can’t play” an absurd number of times.

Skill Challenge. Another option is similar, but more involved. Have all involved characters roll a Charisma (Gaming Set) check (including Kaldur, though the half-orc has disadvantage on his roll) and a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check (this time not including Kaldur). Whoever rolls the lowest on the first is eliminated from the rest of the game. Any player that passes the second check notices that Kaldur has called “can’t play” far more than normal. Then, have all remaining players repeat their checks. Continue until only one player remains. That player is the winner.

Playing the Game. The final option is to actually play a game of Dragondung with the players. In this case, have all players make a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check after each round. On a success, they notice that Kaldur seems absolutely terrible at the game, and has called “can’t play” far more than any skilled player should. The rules are included in the sidebar.

The Object. Kaldur’s game is a test. He’s not looking for an adventurer’s skill at the game, but rather their strength of character. In fact, he’s very, very bad at this game. If any player chooses to follow Kaldur’s

example and refuse to lie, even though that ensures their loss, he’s satisfied with their character and shares what he knows.

Dragondung

Deal the cards of a standard 52-card deck out evenly. If there are remainders, place them face down in the center of the table as the beginning of the discard pile.

Play begins with the player to the left of the dealer. This player places the Aces in their hand face down on the discard pile and announces his play to the table: “One Ace.” If the player does not have any Aces, or if they wish to get rid of more than one card, they have two choices. One option is to call “can’t play” and collect half of the cards in the discard pile, adding them to their hand. Alternatively, they may bluff and play non-Ace cards while announcing: “Two (or one, or three, or four – whichever they prefer) Aces.” The next player plays 2s, the next player plays 3s, and so on. If a player doesn’t believe an announcement, they may call out, “Dragondung!” The person who played the cards must turn them over and show the challenger whether they are bluffing or not. A player who is caught bluffing must pick up the entire discard pile and add it to their hand. If a challenged player is not bluffing, then the challenger must pick up the discard pile. When the rank to play reaches Kings, it then goes back to Aces and the numbers start again.

Dragondung is one option, but feel free to substitute other bluffing games to match your group’s preference and style — one group ended up using a set of dice to play a game of “Liar’s Dice” — while playtesting this adventure and had great fun!

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

The adventurers might decide to beat the information out of Kaldur. If this happens, the townsfolk jump to his defense, and the cook, a huge woman with a massive rolling pin (**Berserker**), hears the commotion from the kitchen and comes out to put down the rowdy adventurers who started the fight.

EXPLORATION

None. There’s not much to be explored in the Rat’s Nest.

SOCIAL

If the adventurers try to intimidate Kaldur, he gruffly refuses to speak with them further. Start scene B early. If the adventurers are mostly polite, Kaldur offers them a deal: Impress him in a game of Dragondung, and he’ll tell them what they want to know. He won’t put any further wager on the game. If they fail to pass his test, he refuses. In any case, move to scene B after the game.

Scene B. Tap-Room Two-Step

The adventurers find themselves caught in the middle of a tavern brawl.

Prerequisites

Run this scene after Kaldur's game of Dragondung, or if the party has made him hostile by trying to intimidate him.

Creatures/NPCs

Kaldur (a **Berserker**), and the townsfolk (**commoners**) from the previous scene are still present, but it's the new arrivals who are likely to draw the adventurers' focus. A band of off-duty Red Plumes (a **Bandit Captain**, an **Apprentice Wizard**, and four **Thugs**, several pints deep, enter the tavern and immediately begin making boisterous demands. Seeing Kaldur, one of them spits on the ground loudly complaining that he "didn't have to share space with filth when the First Law of Humanity was still in place", while another demands his seat at the bar. A third flings insults about his race (tusk-tooth, underbite, half-breed, etc.). Kaldur ignores them. Instead quietly sipping his glass of water.

Objectives/Goals. The guards are uninhibited and wild from drink. They're on a power trip and want everyone to know just how big and bad they are.

What Do They Know? The Red Plumes have no useful information. They just want to fight.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Replace all of the **thugs** with **Bandits**. Remove the **Apprentice Wizard**. The **Bandit Captain** is so drunk he has disadvantage on his attack rolls.
- **Weak:** Remove the **Apprentice Wizard** and one **Thug**.
- **Strong:** The **Commoners** don't enter the fight.
- **Very Strong:** Add a **Thug** and replace the **Apprentice Wizard** with a **Thayan Apprentice**.

A Note on the Red Plumes' Xenophobia:

Hillsfar has a long history of discrimination against non-humans, and it wasn't but a few years ago that non-humans weren't even allowed in the city. As such, a good number of the people still harbor fear, doubts, and even hatred for the unfamiliar. The intent of the scene is to allow the players a cathartic victory over those sorts of people. However, some players have to deal with too much racism in their real lives, and don't want to see it in a fantasy game. Read your table. If players seem uncomfortable with such issues, adjust the Red Plumes' attacks to be more generic. Perhaps they simply have decided that Kaldur is in their leader's favorite seat, and their aggression has nothing to do with his race. Maybe they want to test their mettle against the famous cage fighter. The important thing is that the scene plays out in a manner that is fun and satisfactory for all players, and doesn't cause any real-life conflict.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

None of the NPCs present are going to attempt to kill anyone, aiming instead to knock out. When the brawl breaks out, give each player control of one of the **commoners**, who jump to Kaldur's defense. A player's commoner acts immediately after that player's character in initiative. Every NPC involved uses improvised weapons rather than their usual weapon. All NPCs may use their usual attack modifiers, but their damage die is only a d4. Encourage players to do the same!

EXPLORATION

None. There's not much to be explored in the Rat's Nest.

SOCIAL

If human adventurers stand up for Kaldur, one of the drunken Red Plumes call them "race-traitors" and throws a punch. If a non-human adventurer stands up for Kaldur, one of the drunken Red Plumes tells them to "remember their place" and head-butts them. In either case, roll for initiative.

Wrapping up the Episode

If the party stood up for Kaldur in Scene B, he thanks them for the help and tells them what he knows about the seller of the missing books, even if they previously tried to intimidate him or failed his test. Getting the description of the seller completes **Story Objective B**. If they impressed him by staying honest during his test, he also warns them to stay away from Tomas Woodrue. He's been buying up tenements near the docks - the only place the majority of the city's nonhumans can afford to live - and trying to strong-arm them out so they have no place to go but out of the city. He provides the contact information for several people who can back up his claim, both human and non-human, and swears to the truth of it.

If instead the adventurers beat Kaldur into submission in Scene A, he begrudgingly tells them what he knows and then leaves the tavern in shame. This completes **Story Objective B**.

Adventure Rewards

At the end of the session, the characters each receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. These rewards include advancement and treasure, and may include player rewards—magic item unlocks, story awards, or new downtime activities, as follows:

Advancement and Treasure Checkpoints

The characters receive **1** advancement checkpoint and **1** treasure checkpoint for each **story** objective that they complete, as follows:

- **Story Objective B:** Get a description of the thief from the half-orc Kaldur.

Dungeon Master Rewards

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn **advancement and treasure checkpoints** and downtime as though you played the adventure, but none of the adventure's **player rewards**.

However, this adventure may qualify for rewards earned by completing DM Quests. See the *ALDMG (Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide)* for more information about DM Quests.

Appendix 1: Locations & NPCs

The following NPCs and locations feature **prominently** in this adventure.

- **Tomas Woodrue (TOH-mas WUHD-row).** Tomas is the archetypal member of a bloated aristocracy, a relic of a bygone era. He clings to the Great Laws of Hillsfar, despite their irrelevance in the modern era. In this adventure, he wants revenge on the thief who stole his prized collection, and to have that collection returned to him. He also wants to profit off of the suffering of non-humans.

Quote: *"Silence, little gnome. The grownups are talking. And while you're at it bring me another leg of lamb!"*

Personality: *If you do me an injury, I will crush you, ruin your name, and salt your fields.*

Ideal: *Purity. Hillsfar should belong to those who made it great: humans.*

Bond: *My prized collection of rare tomes means more to me than the world.*

Flaw: *I take joy in flexing my power over others.*

- **Kaldur (KAHL-duhr).** As it is with most half-orcs, Kaldur never quite had a place in the world. A veteran of the Rage of Demons, Kaldur doesn't know anything but fighting — but his son Jahl's going to be better than that. He's going to make something of himself.

Quote: *"I don't want him to be like me. I want him to get as far away from my life as far gets."*

Personality: *I may not be warm and kind, but I'm always polite and respectful.*

Ideal: *Legacy. Our children will be better than we are.*

Bond: *Everything I do, I do for my son.*

Flaw: *I'm gruff, off-putting, and broody. That can make it difficult to make friends.*

Appendix 2: Creature Statistics

Apprentice Wizard

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10 (no armor)

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Arcana +4, History +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Spellcasting. The apprentice is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*
- 1st Level (2 slots): *burning hands*, *disguise self*, *shield*

Actions

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

Bandit Captain

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

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Strength +4, Dexterity +5, Wisdom +2

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

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

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

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

Actions

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

Berserker

Medium humanoid (any race), any chaotic alignment

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Reckless Attack. At the start of its turn, the berserker can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Actions

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

Commoner

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10 (no armor)

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Actions

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

Thayan Apprentice

Medium humanoid (human), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 27 (5d8+5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+0)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Arcana +4

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Thayan

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Doomvault Devotion. Within the Doomvault, the apprentice has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

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

- Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*
- 1st Level (4 slots): *burning hands*, *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *shield*
- 2nd Level (3 slots): *blur*, *scorching ray*

Actions

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

Thug

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

Armor Class 11 (leather armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+3)	11 (+1)	14 (+3)	10 (-1)	11 (+0)	11 (-1)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

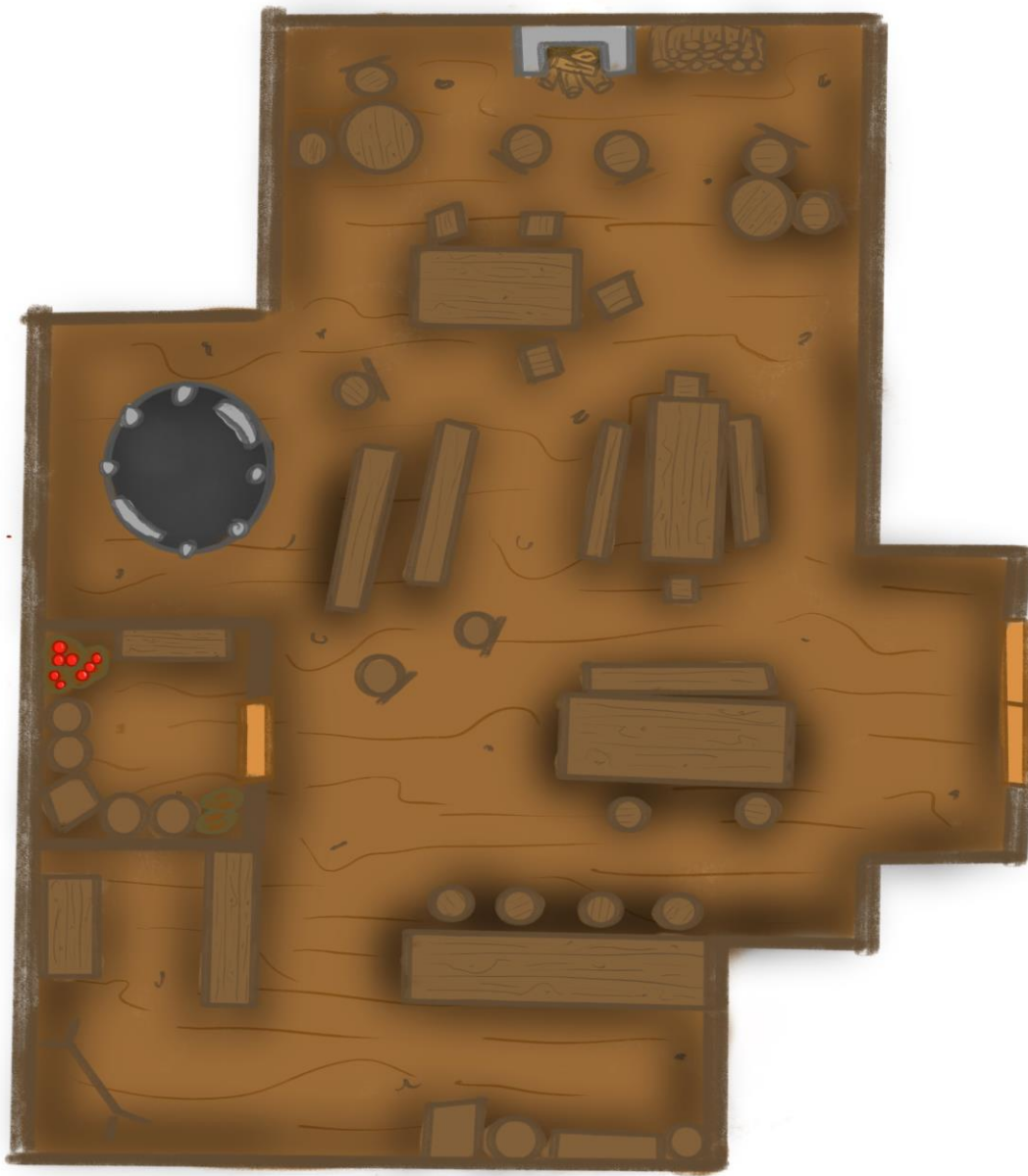
Actions

Multiattack. The thug makes two melee attacks.

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

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

Appendix 3: "Taproom Two-Step" Map



Appendix 4: Dungeon Master Tips

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

New to D&D Adventurers League?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/playevents/organized-play>

To DM an adventure, you **must** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character whose level is within the adventure’s level range. Characters playing in a **hardcover** adventure may continue to play to but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they **can’t return** to the first one if they’re outside its level range.

Preparing the Adventure

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you’d like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you’d like to portray an NPC or a tactic you’d like to use in a combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure’s appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you’d like to use to aid you in running this adventure—such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master, but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character’s adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer). The players fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for advancement and treasure checkpoints, downtime days, and renown. These values are updated at the conclusion of the session.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player’s character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the D&D Adventurers League Players Guide for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it’s the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters’ spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

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When combat is a possibility, the adventure will provide a sidebar that helps you to determine the best mix/number of opponents to provide them with to create an appropriate challenge. While you’re not bound to these adjustments; they’re here for your convenience and consideration.

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

Determining Party Strength

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

Episode 4: A Friend in Greed

Estimated Duration: 45 Minutes

The City Plaza

In this episode, the adventurers meet with a friend of one of Woodrue's "business associates" and help her solve a puzzle. **NOTE:** This episode is puzzle-heavy. If your group doesn't enjoy puzzles, you could instead have Irena test the characters by challenging them to a duel — the entire party against her and her faerie dragon.

Prerequisites

Run this scene if the adventurers chose to visit the Sivon Nekho after speaking with Tomas Woodrue.

Story Objective C

Finding out where Sivon found the book completes **Story Objective C**.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The meeting is set in the city plaza, at a table in a nice spot shaded by an oak tree.

Lighting. The sun shines bright overhead, making the area brightly lit.

Creatures/NPCs

Several people mill about here and there, but the only one of note is **Irena Littleknight** a (**Swashbuckler**) an unassuming Halfling with a thin, heart-shaped face framed by wild, unkempt red curls. Her brow is seemingly constantly furrowed, and harsh lines on either side of her lips make it clear she's not one to smile easily. She is sitting at

the table where the party is meant to meet Sivon, currently focused on a box on the table in front of her, and appears frustrated by it. When the players approach, they can see she has Lorelei (**Faerie Dragon (Violet)**) curled up asleep on her lap.

Objectives/Goals. Right now, Irena just wants to solve the puzzle she's working on. She's supposed to give the adventurers the information they're here for, but she sees an opportunity in their arrival to get some help with her frustrations. Lorelei wants to sleep.

What Do They Know? Sivon won't be coming to the meeting, as he had to leave town suddenly. He sent Irena in his stead. She has the information the players came for, but won't give it up freely: Sivon found the dropped book in an alley sporting a sewer grate and bordering a carpenter's shop, an orphanage, and two houses. If the adventurers want to get this out of her, they'll have to help her with get her puzzle box open.

Treasure & Rewards

If the party played Episode 2: Drowning in Muck and tells Irena the secret word ("flumph"), she eyes them curiously and produces their prize:

- **The Ledger.** This ledger appears to be a "second set of books" detailing some unsavory transactions made by Tomas Woodrue. It also details his income from his rental properties. Curiously, some tenants seem to be getting a much better rate than others.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

If attacked Irena and her Faerie Dragon fight back. A squad of Red Plumes arrive before the characters can kill Irena to put them in stocks. They spend a day in the stocks getting fruit thrown at them, but Irena finds their open violence stupid in the most hilarious way, and tells them the information they came for (after shoving a pie in each of their faces).

EXPLORATION

If a player tries to pickpocket Irena, have them roll a DC 15 Sleight of Hand check. If they succeed, they manage to slip the ledger out of one of her pockets (See Treasure & Rewards). If they fail, she smacks them on the cheek and tells them to cut it out with a scowl.

SOCIAL

Irena doesn't plan on giving the party the information they want unless they help her solve the puzzle box she's working on (see next page). If they're stumped, use Irena to give hints. She's also a great way to give a running commentary as they try to solve the puzzle — she has very little patience for stupidity.

Irena's Puzzle Box: First Puzzle

The first puzzle appears as an 8x8 grid laid out on the top of the box, each square roughly one inch wide. Give the players a copy of **Player Handout A**. Irena explains that whenever a creature touches a finger to one of the squares, a magical symbol in the shape of a one horned dragon appears, flashing slowly at regular intervals. If the creature releases his or her finger while it flashes a dragon, nothing happens, but the dragon continues to glow. But if he or she releases a finger while no sigil is showing, the result seems to be random. Sometimes, nothing happens at all. Sometimes, a new sigil appears — the face of either a nothic, a human, or an aboleth. Sometimes, the box gives the user a stinging shock, and all the glowing sigils disappear.

The Rules of the Game

Every space on the grid has a predefined property. You can find the properties of each space either here or in **Appendix 3B**. The rules are simple:

- **Objective:** Identify all dragon spaces by releasing a finger while the dragon sigil is visible. If the characters manage this while no other (non-dragon) spaces are “marked” with the dragon sigil, the first lid of the box opens, and they may proceed to the second puzzle.
- **The Dragon Sigil.** If a creature releases his or her finger on any space when the dragon sigil is visible, the sigil remains visible, “marking” that space.
- **Dragon Spaces.** If a creature releases his or her finger on a dragon space when the dragon sigil is NOT visible, they receive an electric shock and take 1d4 lightning damage.
- **Nothic Spaces.** If a creature releases his or her finger on a nothic space when the dragon sigil is NOT visible, the nothic sigil appears and remains visible.
- **Human Spaces.** If a creature releases his or her finger on a human space when the dragon sigil is NOT visible, the human sigil appears and remains visible.
- **Aboloth Spaces.** If a creature releases his or her finger on an aboloth space when the dragon sigil is NOT visible, the aboloth sigil appears and remains visible.

Puzzle Hints and Alternatives

Puzzles aren't for everyone. If the players begin to get frustrated you can offer them one or more of the following options:

Good Eye-dea! Irena observes that the nothic has only one eye, the human two, and the aboloth three. She wonders aloud whether this might be in some way a clue to solving the puzzle. Alternatively, you could have a player make a DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check to recall this information instead.

Safety First. Irena points out that even the spaces that normally shock the character manipulating the box don't produce a shock when marked with the Dragon Sigil. Alternatively, a player can notice this with a DC 10 Intelligence check.

Oh, I Get It Now! Irena notices a pattern and explains the rules of the game to the adventurers. Alternatively, a player could determine the rules with a DC 10 Intelligence Check.

Alternative: Skill Challenge. If your players aren't interested in puzzles, you can allow them to make a series of intelligence checks to solve the puzzle instead. Each time one of the characters makes this check, roll 2d6+5 to determine the DC (or just use the average DC of 12). Once the adventurers accumulate three successes, they successfully complete the puzzle. However, each time they fail a check, the character attempting the check takes a number of lightning damage equal to the difference between the result of his or her ability check and the DC.

Just Give Me That! If the adventurers are well and truly stumped, or if they just seem bored or frustrated with the puzzle, you can, of course, just have Irena figure it out and show them the solution. Note that this option significantly shortens the episode.

Irena's Puzzle Box: Second Puzzle

What Irena thinks is one puzzle is actually two! Finishing the first merely leads the person who solves it to the second. Only by finishing the second can the group unlock the box. The second puzzle appears as some kind of complex chart, with circular depressed nodes connected by golden lines. Some of the nodes aren't depressed, but instead have golden etchings in them of various creatures, including a peryton, a manticore, a griffin, and a lion scattered about the design. A second, smaller chart, disconnected from the larger one, has only three nodes, with each of the outer two connected the center one by golden lines. None of these three nodes are depressed, and contain (from left to right) etchings of a chicken, a cockatrice, and a lizard. Also inside the lid of the box is a small pouch containing twenty of tokens that seem to be sized to fit in the depression. Each token has a unique design etched in gold as follows:

- Fish
- Hippocampus
- Hippogriff
- Horse
- Centaur
- Dragon Turtle
- Turtle
- Rabbit
- Scorpion
- Dragon
- Goat
- Jackalope
- Chimera
- Deer
- Satyr
- Bird
- Sphinx
- Human
- Yuan-Ti
- Snake

Hand the players a copy of **Player Handout B** and **Player Handout C** (It is recommended you cut out the tokens from Player Handout C before the game start, but this isn't necessary). Irena hasn't attempted this game, and thus doesn't know its rules.

The Rules of the Game

The tokens do indeed fit into the spaces, but they can't go just anywhere.

- **Objective:** The puzzle is solved if they can create a chart wherein all of the tokens bearing chimeric creatures (those formed from parts of various animals) connected to each of the different creatures that make up their various parts, and no creature is connected to a creature that doesn't either compose one of its parts or of which it is one of the parts.
- **The Key:** The separate chart (the chicken, cockatrice, and lizard) at the bottom is a hint to the solution.
- **The Solution:** The solution is available in **Appendix 4C**.

Puzzle Hints and Alternatives

Puzzles aren't for everyone. If the players begin to get frustrated you can offer them one or more of the following options:

The Chicken is the Key! Irena observes that the smaller diagram at the bottom (the one with the chicken, cockatrice, and lizard) appears to be some kind of key. Alternatively, a player can notice this with a DC 10 Intelligence check.

Chimeras All Around. Irena points out that a large number of the creatures represented are chimeric — that is, creatures made up of parts of various other creatures. Alternatively, a player can notice this with a DC 10 Nature check.

Oh, I Get It Now! Irena notices a pattern and explains the rules of the game to the adventurers. Alternatively, a player could determine the rules with a DC 10 Intelligence Check.

Alternative: Skill Challenge. If your players aren't interested in puzzles, you can allow them to make a series of intelligence checks to solve the puzzle instead. Each time one of the characters makes this check, roll 2d6+5 to determine the DC (or just use the average DC of 12). Once the adventurers accumulate three successes, they successfully complete the puzzle. However, each time they fail a check, the character attempting the check takes a number of psychic damage equal to the difference between the result of his or her ability check and the DC. They're just that frustrated.

Just Give Me That! If the adventurers are well and truly stumped, or if they just seem bored or frustrated with the puzzle, you can, of course, just have Irena figure it out and show them the solution. Note that this option significantly shortens the episode.

Wrapping up the Episode

When the adventurers solve the second puzzle, the box pops open, revealing a tiny vial within. If the party asks what's in the vial, Irena only smiles and remarks that maybe they'll find out next time they meet. Thankful for their help, she reveals what she knows about the book Siron found: that he found the dropped book in an alley sporting a sewer grate and bordering a carpenter's shop, an orphanage, and two houses. This completes **Story Objective C**.

Adventure Rewards

At the end of the session, the characters each receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. These rewards include advancement and treasure, and may include player rewards—magic item unlocks, story awards, or new downtime activities, as follows:

Advancement and Treasure Checkpoints

The characters receive **1** advancement checkpoint and **1** treasure checkpoint for each **story** objective that they complete, as follows:

- **Story Objective C:** Learn the location of one of the stolen books from Irena Littleknight.

Dungeon Master Rewards

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn **advancement and treasure checkpoints** and downtime as though you played the adventure, but none of the adventure's **player rewards**.

However, this adventure may qualify for rewards earned by completing DM Quests. See the ALDMG (*Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*) for more information about DM Quests.

Appendix 1: Locations & NPCs

The following NPCs and locations feature **prominently** in this adventure.

- **Tomas Woodrue (TOH-mas WUHD-row).** Tomas is the archetypal member of a bloated aristocracy, a relic of a bygone era. He clings to the Great Laws of Hillsfar, despite their irrelevance in the modern era. In this adventure, he wants revenge on the thief who stole his prized collection, and to have that collection returned to him. He also wants to profit off of the suffering of non-humans.

Quote: *"Silence, little gnome. The grownups are talking. And while you're at it bring me another leg of lamb!"*

Personality: *If you do me an injury, I will crush you, ruin your name, and salt your fields.*

Ideal: *Purity. Hillsfar should belong to those who made it great: humans.*

Bond: *My prized collection of rare tomes means more to me than the world.*

Flaw: *I take joy in flexing my power over others.*

- **Irena Littleknight (Eye-REE-nuh LIT-uhl-nite).** A halfling thief in the service of the Zhentarim, Irena has big plans for her career. But today, she's focused on her puzzle box. She's got big plans for what's inside, too...

Quote: *Yeah, that WOULD be a great idea, if it weren't a terrible one.*

Personality: *The best way to get me to do something is to tell me I can't do it.*

Ideal: *Self. A person's got to look out for themselves. You've got to know who you are and who you want to be.*

Bond: *I will become the greatest thief that ever lived.*

Flaw: *I have very little patience for stupidity, especially my own.*

Appendix 2: Creature Statistics

Faerie Dragon (Violet)

Tiny dragon, chaotic good

Armor Class 15 (no armor)

Hit Points 14 (4d4+4)

Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Arcana +4, Perception +3, Stealth +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Draconic, Sylvan

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Superior Invisibility. As a bonus action, the dragon can magically turn invisible until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the dragon wears or carries is invisible with it.

Limited Telepathy. Using Telepathy, the dragon can magically communicate with any other faerie dragon within 60 feet of it.

Magic Resistance. The faerie dragon has advantage on saving throws and other magical effects.

Innate Spellcasting. The dragon's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast a number of spells, requiring no material components. As the dragon ages and changes color, it gains additional spells as shown below.

1/day each: *color spray, dancing lights, hallucinatory terrain, mage hand, major image, minor illusion, mirror image, polymorph, suggestion*

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

Euphoria Breath (Recharge 5-6). The dragon exhales a puff of euphoria gas at one creature within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw, or for 1 minute, the target can't take reactions and must roll a d6 at the start of each of its turns to determine its behavior for the turn:

1-4. The target takes no action or bonus action and uses all of its movement to move in a random direction.

5-6. The target doesn't move, and the only thing it can do this turn is make a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Swashbuckler

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

Armor Class 17 (leather armor)

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +5, Persuasion +6

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Lightfooted. The swashbuckler can take the Dash or Disengage action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Suave Defense. While the swashbuckler is wearing light or no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Charisma modifier.

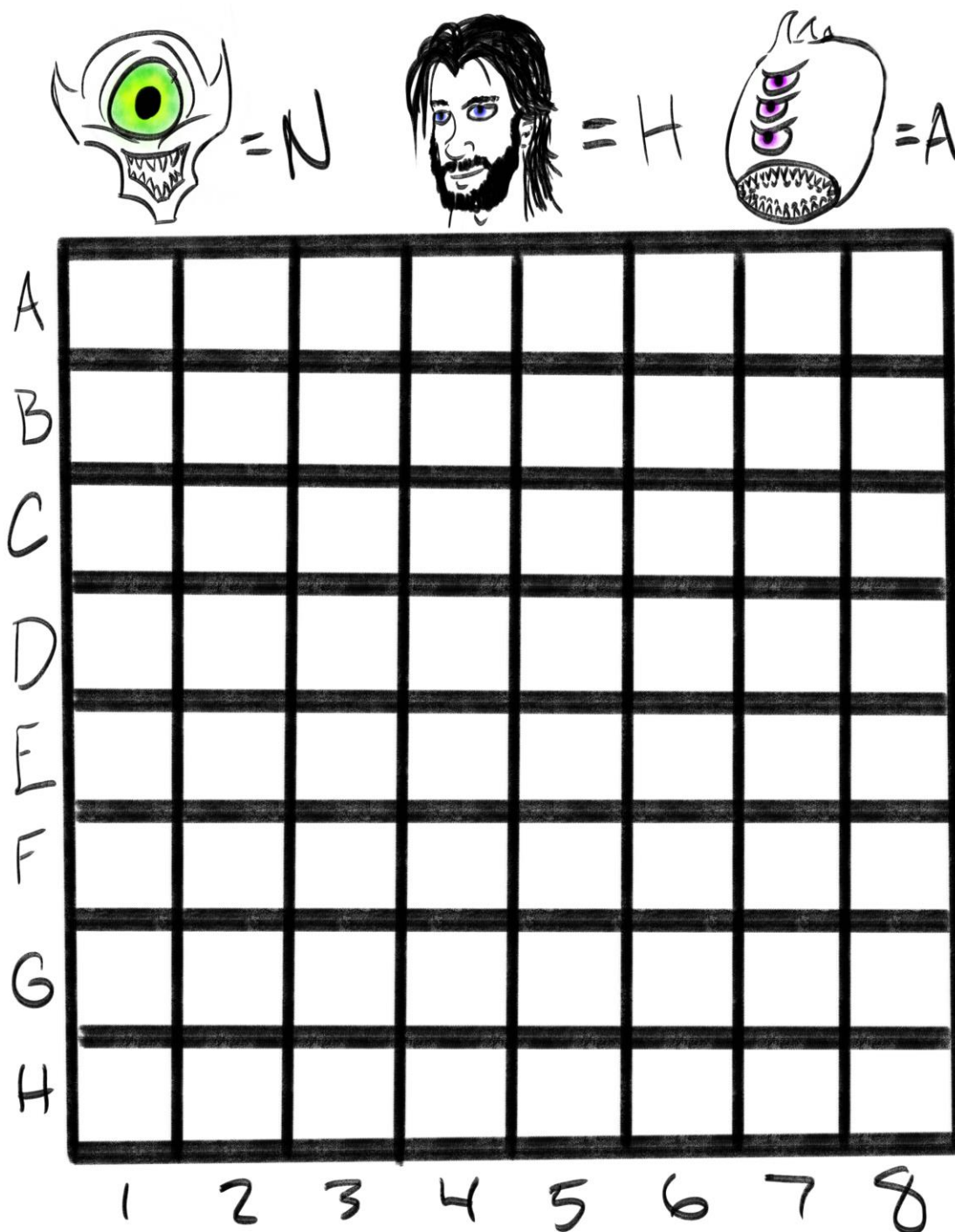
Actions

Multiattack. The swashbuckler makes three attacks: one with a dagger and two with its rapier.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

Appendix 3a: Irena's First Puzzle (Player Handout A)



Appendix 3b: Irena's First Puzzle (Solution)

The Rules of the Game

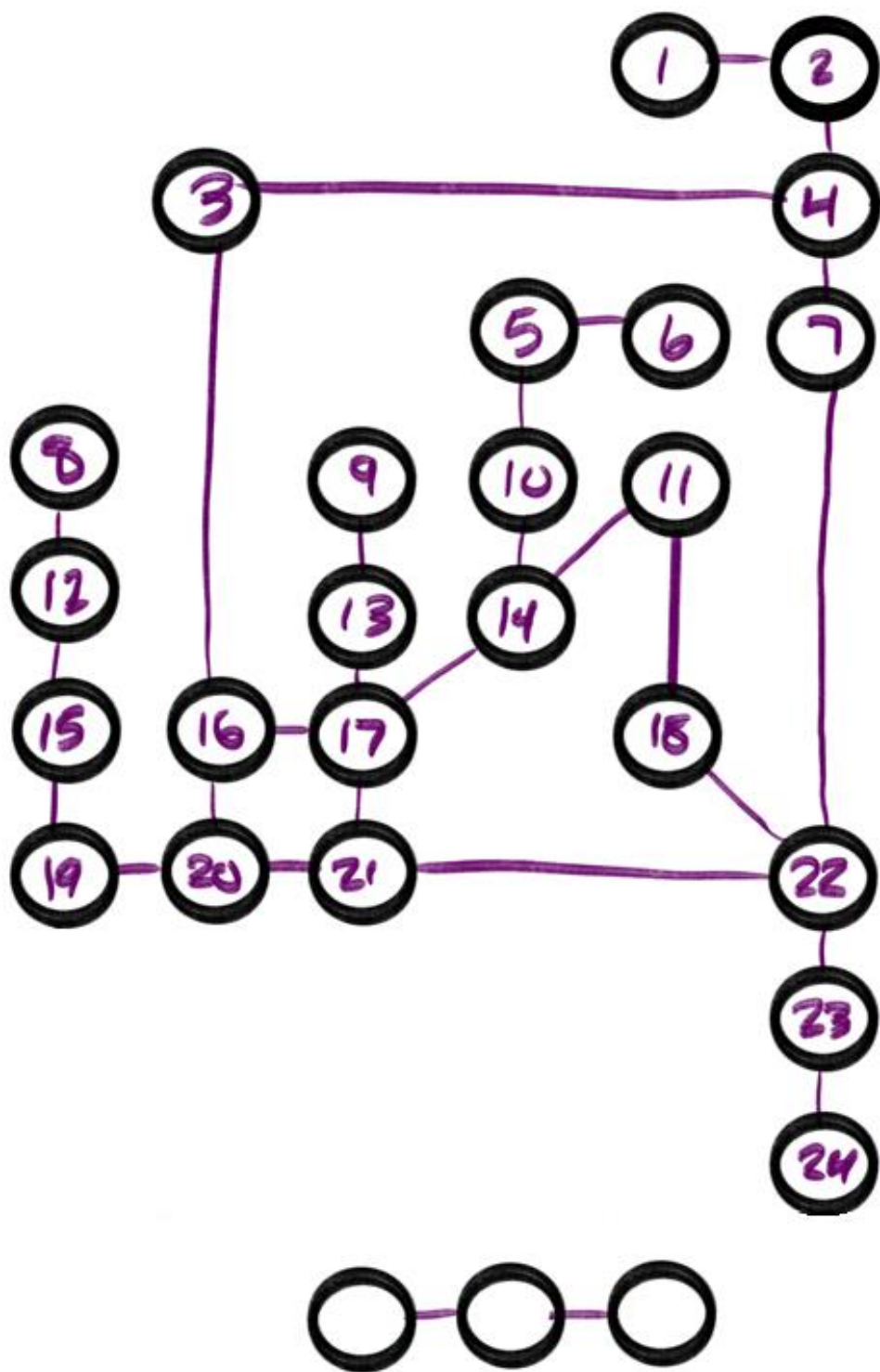
Every space on the grid has a predefined property. You can find the properties of each space below. The rules are simple:

- **Objective:** Identify all dragon spaces by releasing a finger while the dragon sigil is visible. If the characters manage this while no other (non-dragon) spaces are "marked" with the dragon sigil, the first lid of the box opens, and they may proceed to the second puzzle.
- **The Dragon Sigil.** If a creature releases his or her finger on any space when the dragon sigil is visible, the sigil remains visible, "marking" that space.
- **Dragon Spaces (Marked by Stars).** If a creature releases his or her finger on a dragon space when the dragon sigil is NOT visible, they receive an electric shock and take 1d4 lightning damage.
- **Nothic Spaces.** If a creature releases his or her finger on a nothic space when the dragon sigil is NOT visible, the nothic sigil appears and remains visible. Solution: A nothic space denotes that the space is adjacent or diagonal to **1** dragon space.
- **Human Spaces.** If a creature releases his or her finger on a human space when the dragon sigil is NOT visible, the human sigil appears and remains visible. Solution: A human space denotes that the space is adjacent or diagonal to **2** dragon spaces.
- **Aboleth Spaces.** If a creature releases his or her finger on an aboleth space when the dragon sigil is NOT visible, the aboleth sigil appears and remains visible. Solution: An aboleth space denotes that the space is adjacent or diagonal to **3** dragon spaces.
- **Blank Spaces.** If a creature releases his or her finger on a blank space when the dragon sigil is NOT visible, all sigils in adjacent spaces become visible.
- **The Solution:** The solution is marked to the right, using an N to mark all Nothic Spaces, an H to mark all Human spaces, and an A to mark all Aboleth Spaces. A star marks all dragon spaces.



A			N	★	H	N	N	
B	N	N	H	N	H	★	H	N
C	N	★	H	N	N	H	★	H
D	N	A	★	H		N	H	★
E		H	★	H			H	H
F		N	N	N			N	★
G	N	N	N			N	H	H
H	N	★	N			N	★	N
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

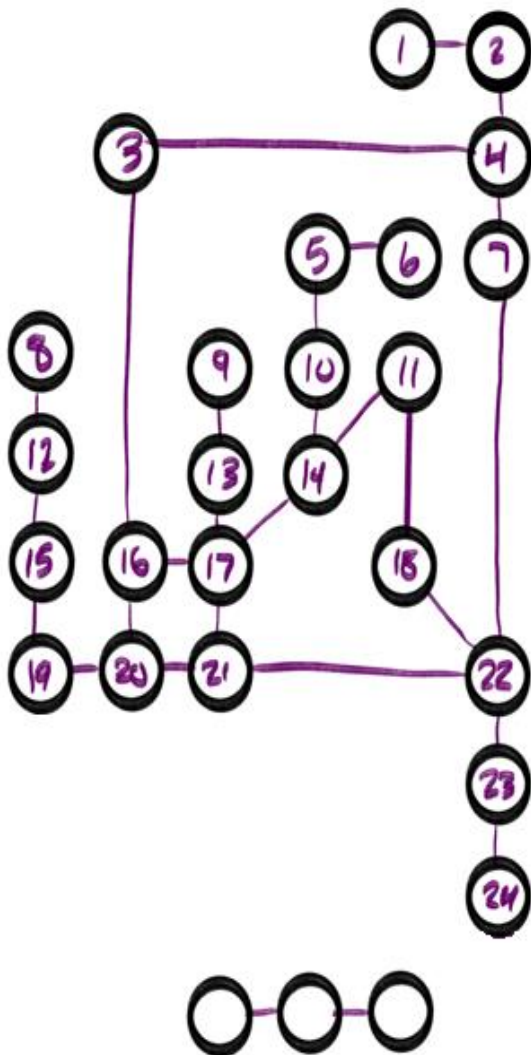
Appendix 4a: Irena's Second Puzzle (Player Handout B)



Appendix 4b: Irena's Second Puzzle Tokens (Player Handout C)



Appendix 4c: Irena's Second Puzzle (Solution)



The Rules of the Game

The tokens do indeed fit into the spaces, but they can't go just anywhere.

- **Objective:** The puzzle is solved if they can create a chart wherein all of the tokens bearing chimeric creatures (those formed from parts of various animals) connected to each of the different creatures that make up their various parts, and no creature is connected to a creature that doesn't either compose one of its parts or of which it is one of the parts.

- **The Key:** The separate chart (showing from left to right the chicken, the cockatrice, and the lizard) at the bottom is a hint to the solution.

- **The Solution:**

The pieces must be placed in the following locations:

1. Fish
2. Hippocampus
3. Hippogriff
4. Horse
5. Dragon Turtle
6. Turtle
7. Centaur
8. Rabbit
9. Scorpion
10. Dragon
11. Goat
12. Jackalope
13. Manticore
14. Chimera
15. Deer
16. Griffin
17. Lion
18. Satyr
19. Peryton
20. Bird
21. Sphinx
22. Human
23. Yuan-Ti
24. Snake

Appendix 5: Dungeon Master Tips

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

New to D&D Adventurers League?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/playevents/organized-play>

To DM an adventure, you **must** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character whose level is within the adventure’s level range. Characters playing in a **hardcover** adventure may continue to play to but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they **can’t return** to the first one if they’re outside its level range.

Preparing the Adventure

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you’d like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you’d like to portray an NPC or a tactic you’d like to use in a combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure’s appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you’d like to use to aid you in running this adventure—such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master, but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character’s adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer). The players fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for advancement and treasure checkpoints, downtime days, and renown. These values are updated at the conclusion of the session.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player’s character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the D&D Adventurers League Players Guide for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it’s the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters’ spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

Adjusting This Adventure

When combat is a possibility, the adventure will provide a sidebar that helps you to determine the best mix/number of opponents to provide them with to create an appropriate challenge. While you’re not bound to these adjustments; they’re here for your convenience and consideration.

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

Determining Party Strength

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

Episode 5: Rat in a Trap (Story Objective D)

Estimated Duration: 50 Minutes

Scene A. The Alley

With all the clues they need to find the thief, the adventurers finally confront the Grey Rat!

Prerequisites

Run this scene after the adventurers have gathered all of clues from the previous mini-adventure episodes in the series. Alternatively, if you are planning on running only **Episode 5: Rat in a Trap**, run this episode immediately after the **Call to Action**.

Story Objective A

Capturing or killing the **Grey Rat** is **Story Objective D**.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The alley is only ten feet wide. It borders a carpenter's shop, an orphanage, and two run-down houses.

Lighting. The sun shines overhead. The alley is bathed in bright light.

Creatures/NPCs

A Red Plume, a stern-faced human woman by the name of **Sorel**, a (**Guard**) catches the party as they

approach the alley and asks to talk. Despite her tough appearance (particularly while armed and armored as she is), she is a friendly, amiable person, and serves as an upstanding example of what every city guard or soldier should be.

Objectives/Goals. Sorel has heard about the adventurers' pursuit of a thief, and wants them to deal with the thief the right way — apprehend them so that they may stand lawful trial, rather than kill them in an act of vigilante justice. She offers them a pair of manacles to clap on the thief once he's knocked out. She knows the adventurers are working with Tomas Woodrue, and says she can't stop them if they decide they want to kill the thief, as for some reason her superiors have ordered her not to interfere, but she does plead with them to do the right thing.

What Does She Know? Sorel doesn't know who the thief is or where he is, but she is more than willing to provide any information she has if it means the adventurers comply with her request. She is secretly investigating their employer, Woodrue, and just needs evidence of his wrongdoings and a few key witnesses who will swear to them in court in order to bring him down. So far, however, both have eluded her.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

If the adventurers for some reason attack Sorel, she fights back, but stands little chance against them. She fights to the bitter end.

EXPLORATION

Most likely, the clues the adventurers have point them to either the orphanage or the woodshop. If they investigate the houses, they find that both are abandoned, with nothing of note inside. If they head into the woodshop, proceed to **Scene B**. If they instead go to the orphanage, proceed to **Scene C**.

SOCIAL

Sorel can be persuaded to come with the adventurers to help apprehend the thief with a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, but only if they can give her both witnesses and evidence in her case against Woodrue. The contacts they might have gotten from Kaldur in **Episode 3** and the ledger they might have gotten from Irena in **Episode 4** serve for this purpose.

Scene B. The Woodshop

In this scene, the adventurers find their final clue.

Prerequisites

Run this scene if the adventurers choose to investigate the woodshop.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The woodshop is a simple rectangular building, fifteen feet by twenty-five feet wide. Stairs lead up to living quarters above.

Lighting. The shop is brightly lit by candles and torches in sconces.

Creatures/NPCs

A dwarf carpenter by the name of **Grond Goosebrother (Commoner)** works this shop. He is a stocky fellow with his beard shorn down to just the mustache, sporting a thick wave of brown hair atop his head. His eyebrows seem locked into a raised position, as though he's in a constant state of annoyance at whatever nonsense is being spouted at him.

Objectives/Goals. Grond wants to get back to work.

What Does He Know? If given Kaldur's description of the thief, Grond recognizes him. The description matches his old apprentice, Garth Rey. He came from the orphanage next door. Nice enough lad, but had his head up in the clouds, and talked too much. Terrible carpenter. He didn't last long in the shop, as he was more interested in gimmicks and tricks than sturdy, simple construction.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

If the adventurers attack Grond, they will almost certainly kill him. They'll also almost certainly feel guilty about killing an innocent man for the rest of their days, which luckily won't be too much longer, since they'll probably be arrested and hanged.

EXPLORATION

Grond won't let the adventurers upstairs into his home without a permit. He insists that they buy something or get out.

SOCIAL

Grond is gruff, short, and uninterested in conversation that doesn't involve him selling his crafts. Best to leave him alone.

Scene C. The Orphanage

In this scene, the adventurers finally find the Grey Rat.

Prerequisites

Run this scene if the adventurers choose to investigate the orphanage.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The orphanage is a three-story building. At its widest, it is fifty-five feet by thirty-five feet wide.

Lighting. The orphanage is brightly lit by torches in sconces, high out of reach of the children.

Creatures/NPCs

A Chultan woman named **Nkechi Bankole (Commoner)** operates the orphanage. Nkechi is a kind, gentle woman with a round face and bright eyes, dressed in colorful garb with a beautifully designed textile serving as a head wrapping. Her wrists are adorned with a plethora of mismatched simple beaded necklaces, and a similar hodgepodge of simple charms hang about her neck. Her jewelry is

clearly made by the dozens of children within the building, eating, dancing, crafting, or running about in a variety of games, all under fourteen years of age.

Objectives/Goals. Nkechi wants to protect her children, even if that means protecting them from themselves by turning them over to the law. She is obviously adamantly against the killing of any of her own.

What Does He Know? If given Kaldur's description of the thief, Nkechi can name him as Garth Rey. He was a child of the orphanage until a few years ago, when he aged out. She stresses that she wished he could have stayed, as he was a huge help with the little ones, but she doesn't have the money to provide for the older kids and the younger kids both, since her orphanage runs entirely on donations. But, Garth is no thief! In fact, he has actually become a successful businessman in the past year, to hear him tell it, working with a merchant out of Waterdeep, and has been donating himself recently. In fact, he's here now! He is upstairs reading a story to some of the younger children, having just dropped off a donation.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

If the adventurers attack Nkechi, most of the children begin to cry and flee in fright. A few attack the adventurers, their tiny fists slamming vainly against their cruel aggressors' armor. If they kill Nkechi, all of the orphans are left without anyone to care for them. Congratulations, the adventurers are now more wicked than any monster in the manual. Maybe Volothamp Geddarm will write about them.

EXPLORATION

The stairs lead up to Scene D.

SOCIAL

As the adventurers try to talk to Nkechi, they are constantly interrupted by children who are curious about the exotic adventurers, need help with a craft, are struggling with their studies, or just need someone to kiss their boo-boos. Nkechi quickly and skillfully fills the children's various needs, and returns her attention to the adventurers. One of the younger children might wonder if the adventurers are orphans, too. Knowing adventurers, they probably are. Some children might even ask the adventurers to play with them. If they do, improvise!

Scene D. Attack the Attic!

The adventurers face off with the Grey Rat

Prerequisites

Run this scene when the players head upstairs in the orphanage.

Area Information

This area features:

Dimensions & Terrain. The second floor and the attic are identical, only the attic has no visible means of egress — no ladders, stairs, or even doors.

Lighting. The second floor is brightly lit by torches in sconces, high out of reach of the children. The attic is in total darkness.

The Rope. When the adventurers arrive, they find several children gawking up at a rope dangling from a slight opening in the ceiling. The rope is hastily pulled upwards into the secret trap door.

Creatures/NPCs

Besides the half-dozen children standing on the second floor, the young elven thief calling himself **The Grey Rat** (Garth Rey, a **Martial Arts Adept**), and three **mastiffs** spawned from the robe's patches await the characters in the attic. **Nkechi Bankole** (a Chultan human **Commoner**), might also have followed.

Objectives/Goals. The children are just curious as to what's going on. Nkechi wants to protect her wards. The Grey Rat wants to escape punishment, and while he doesn't kill, he fights for his life and knock foes unconscious to escape.

What Do They Know? The Grey Rat perpetrated the crime and knows where the books he hasn't yet sold off are hidden.

Adjusting the Scene

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this scene:

- **Very Weak:** Remove a **mastiff**. Replace the **martial arts adept** with a **sacred stone monk** with 36 hit points.
- **Weak:** Remove two **mastiffs**.
- **Strong:** Add a **mastiff**.
- **Very Strong:** Add a **mastiff**. The **martial arts adept** has 99 hit points.

The Grey Rat's Lair

The Grey Rat has prepared his attic lair for this eventuality. He has traps set and isn't shy of using patches from his coat to keep from getting caught. Each round on initiative count 20, Garth can choose one of the following effects to occur. He may choose each effect only one time during the combat:

- **I Fell in the Pit:** Garth pulls one of the last patches from his robe and throws it onto the ground. Any adventurer in a 10 foot square of his choosing falls 10 feet to the floor below, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage from the tumble and falling prone.
- **Nothin' But Net:** A net launches from a hidden trap in the ceiling. Garth chooses one creature to make a dexterity saving throw, DC 13. On a failure, the creature is restrained until it is freed. A creature can use its action to make a DC 10 strength check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success. Dealing 5 slashing damage to the net (AC 10) also frees the creature without harming it, ending the effect and destroying the net.
- **Mastiff (Strong or Very Strong Parties Only):** Garth pulls one of the last patches from his robe and throws it onto the ground. It animates into a **mastiff** that follows Garth's commands and protects him from harm.

Note that at the end of combat, Garth's *robe of useful items* is out of useful items. As such, the characters don't unlock this magic item.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

This has the potential to be a pretty tough fight. Some groups will enjoy the challenge, but some might prefer a more simple victory. Don't be afraid to use "I Fell in the Pit" to take a few mastiffs out of the fight along with dropping a player down. Garth is skilled, but he's still just a kid. Tone it down and have him make sub-optimal choices if your players aren't having fun.

EXPLORATION

None. The adventurers have completed their exploration.

SOCIAL

Garth might be persuaded to stand down and turn himself in, but it would take three successful DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) checks or five successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) or Strength (Intimidation) checks. To perform one of these checks requires a character to spend their action on their turn.

Wrap-Up: Concluding the Adventure

The Grey Rat. If the adventurers apprehended Garth without killing him, he thanks them for sparing his life. Nkechi and Sorel also express their gratitude, and laud the adventurers for doing the right thing, even when the wrong thing was easier. Garth reveals the location of most of the books, but says that he already sold a few to a half-orc named Kaldur, and that another one, a scary tome called *The Trial of Asmodeus*, was bought by a knight in a black surcoat emblazoned with the sigil of a blazing ram's skull impaled upon a spear. Sorel is concerned at this, and shares that *Trial* is a rare copy of an even rarer text detailing the Trial of its namesake before the Celestial Jury. This book holds no magic power, but is widely feared for the all-too-convincing heretical ideas recorded within as presented by Asmodeus. If the adventurers killed him instead, they receive the Story Award **Fate of the Rat**. In this case, a note in the attic reveals the locations of the books.

Tomas Woodrue. Tomas Woodrue is excited to hear the thief that stole his prized collection has been brought to justice, and to see his collection returned. He is even more ecstatic if the Grey Rat is dead. He is, however, furious that one of his rarest books was sold to some mystery knight where he will likely never see it again. In any case, he gives the adventurers their promised reward. If the adventurers turned over their evidence and witnesses to Sorel, she arrests Woodrue, but allows the reward the nobleman promised them to "go missing" from evidence so that the adventurers may claim their prize. He goes with her kicking and screaming, and Rizzo slips off to disappear before someone thinks to arrest him too.

Adventure Rewards

At the end of the session, the characters each receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. These rewards include advancement and treasure, and may include player rewards—magic item unlocks, story awards, or new downtime activities, as follows:

Advancement and Treasure Checkpoints

The characters receive **1** advancement checkpoint and **1** treasure checkpoint for each **story** objective that they complete, as follows:

- **Story Objective D:** Apprehend the Grey Rat.

Player Rewards

The characters earn the following player rewards for **completing the adventure**:

Story Awards

Characters playing the adventure may earn:

Fate of the Rat. The Grey Rat didn't survive his encounter with you. His story ends here. *(Awarded if the players killed the Grey Rat in Episode 5).* **See Appendix 8.**

Dungeon Master Rewards

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn **advancement and treasure checkpoints** and downtime as though you played the adventure, but none of the adventure's **player rewards**.

However, this adventure may qualify for rewards earned by completing DM Quests. See the ALDMG (*Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*) for more information about DM Quests.

Appendix 1: Locations & NPCs

The following NPCs and locations feature **prominently** in this adventure.

- **Tomas Woodrue (TOH-mas WUHD-row).** Tomas is the archetypal member of a bloated aristocracy, a relic of a bygone era. He clings to the Great Laws of Hillsfar, despite their irrelevance in the modern era. In this adventure, he wants revenge on the thief who stole his prized collection, and to have that collection returned to him. He also wants to profit off of the suffering of non-humans.

Quote: *“Silence, little gnome. The grownups are talking. And while you’re at it bring me another leg of lamb!”*

Personality: *If you do me an injury, I will crush you, ruin your name, and salt your fields.*

Ideal: *Purity. Hillsfar should belong to those who made it great: humans.*

Bond: *My prized collection of rare tomes means more to me than the world.*

Flaw: *I take joy in flexing my power over others.*

- **Nkechi Bankole (Nuh-KETCH-ee Ban-KOH-lee).** Nkechi’s been living in Hillsfar now for about twenty years, having moved to town in her early twenties at the request of a friend to take over the orphanage. She’d do anything for her kids, even putting her life on the line if she thought it might save one of theirs.

Quote: *From the smallest of ants to the largest of the dinosaurs — every creature is really only looking for love.*

Personality: *I am open-handed and generous.*

Ideal: *Children. Let us all be judged by how we treat the littlest among us.*

Bond: *My children may not have parents, but they do have a mother.*

Flaw: *I often go without so that others don’t have to, even when my own need is great.*

- **Garth Rey (GARTH RAY), the Grey Rat.** An orphaned wood elf fostered by human parents before being orphaned a second time during the Rage of Demons, Garth hasn’t had a great life. But Nkechi taught him that helping others is the ultimate reward, and he’s going to do it — even if it gets him in trouble.

Quote: *“Who you calling street rat?”*

Personality: *I always have a plan for when things go wrong.*

Ideal: *Charity. I steal from the wealthy to help those in need.*

Bond: *I’ll never forget where I came from.*

Flaw: *My good intentions often lead to immoral or illegal acts.*

Appendix 2: Creature Statistics

Commoner

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10 (no armor)

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Actions

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

Guard

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

Martial Arts Adept

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (no armor)

Hit Points 60 (11d8 + 11)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+1)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Insight +5, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Unarmored Defense. While the adept is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its wisdom modifier.

Actions

Multiattack. The adept makes three melee unarmed strikes or three dart attacks.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, the adept can choose one of the following effects:

- The target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or drop one item it is holding (adept's choice).
- The target must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.
- The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the adept's next turn.

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

Reactions

Deflect Missile. In response to being hit with a ranged weapon attack, the adept deflects the missile. The damage it takes from the attack is reduced by 1d10+3. If the damage is reduced to 0, the adept catches the missile if it's small enough to be hold in one hand and the adept has a hand free.

Mastiff

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (no armor)

Hit Points 5 (1d8 + 1)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages –

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The mastiff has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) Checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Sacred Stone Monk

Medium humanoid (any race), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (no armor)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Athletics +3, Perception +4

Senses tremorsense 10 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Unarmored Defense. While the monk is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its wisdom modifier.

Unarmored Movement. While the monk is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its walking speed increases by 10 feet (included in its speed).

Actions

Multiattack. The monk makes two melee attacks.

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

Reactions

Parry. The monk adds 2 to its AC against one melee or ranged attack that would hit it. To do so, the monk must see the attacker.

Appendix 3: "Attack the Attic" Map



Appendix 4: Story Award (Player Handout D)

Fate of the Rat. The Grey Rat didn't survive his encounter with you. His story ends here. *(Awarded if the players killed the Grey Rat in Episode 5).*

Appendix 5: Dungeon Master Tips

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

New to D&D Adventurers League?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/playevents/organized-play>

To DM an adventure, you **must** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character whose level is within the adventure’s level range. Characters playing in a **hardcover** adventure may continue to play to but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they **can’t return** to the first one if they’re outside its level range.

Preparing the Adventure

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you’d like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you’d like to portray an NPC or a tactic you’d like to use in a combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure’s appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you’d like to use to aid you in running this adventure—such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master, but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character’s adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer). The players fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for advancement and treasure checkpoints, downtime days, and renown. These values are updated at the conclusion of the session.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player’s character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability

scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the D&D Adventurers League Players Guide for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it’s the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters’ spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

Adjusting This Adventure

When combat is a possibility, the adventure will provide a sidebar that helps you to determine the best mix/number of opponents to provide them with to create an appropriate challenge. While you’re not bound to these adjustments; they’re here for your convenience and consideration.

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

Determining Party Strength

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