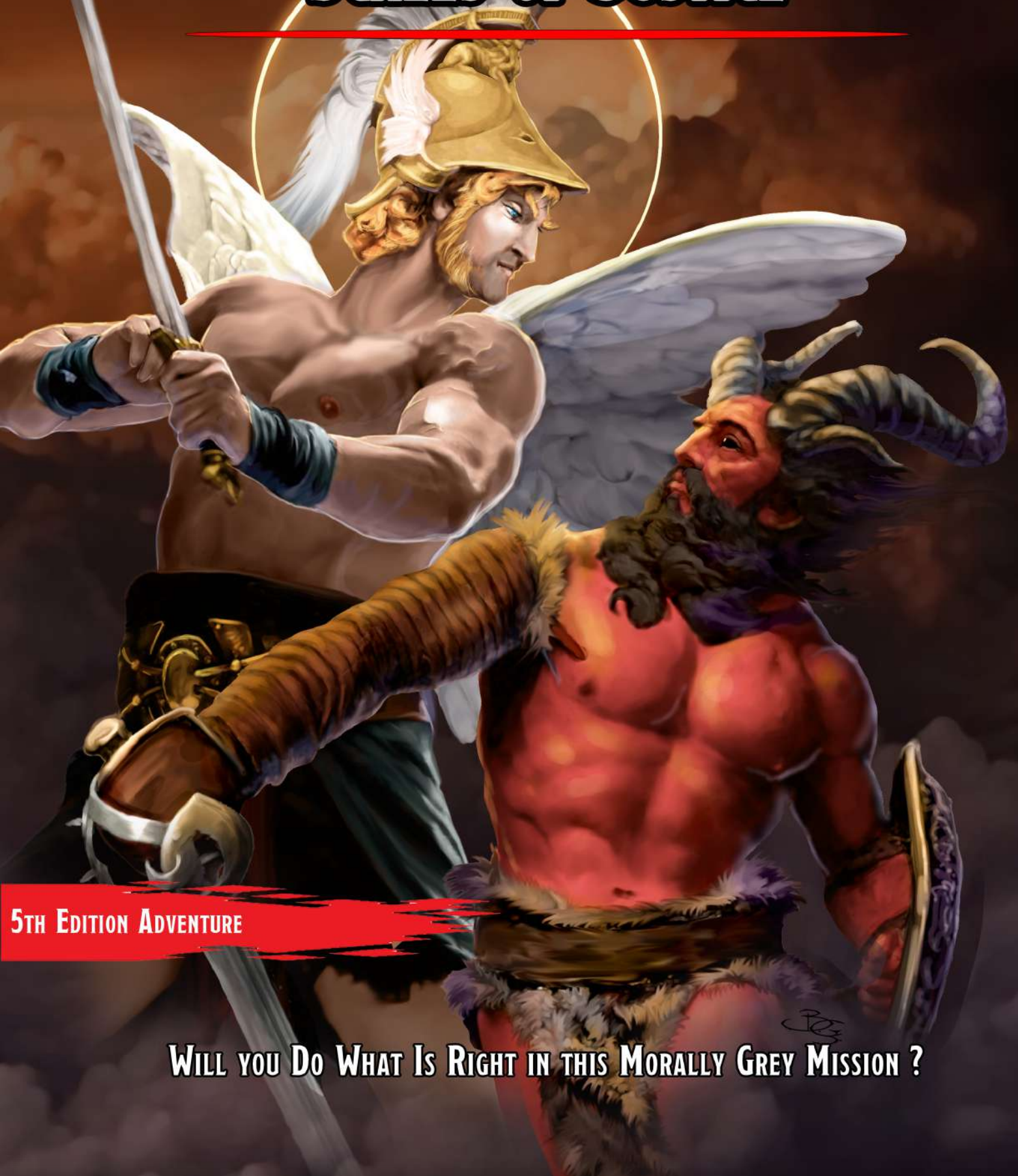


# SCALES OF JUSTICE

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**5TH EDITION ADVENTURE**

**WILL YOU DO WHAT IS RIGHT IN THIS MORALLY GREY MISSION ?**

**MONKEYDM**

# **SCALES OF JUSTICE**

**SCALES OF JUSTICE IS A MORALLY AMBIGUOUS ADVENTURE DESIGNED FOR 3-6 LEVEL 2 CHARACTERS FOR USE WITH THE 5TH EDITION RULESET.**



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# PLOT HOOK

Within the port town of Olin, a father by the name of Heron Lestrade has been working his hardest as a shoemaker, saving enough money to keep his daughter, Zoe, within treatment at The Fairview Clinic, a large hospital, as she is suffering from a harsh illness. Recently, he was robbed of his wealth, all the money saved in his house taken. He has posted signs on questboards asking for aid. The party is now in front of his home.

## CHAPTER 1. A ROBBED HOME

In which the party finds out about their assignment, investigate the scene and try to track down the culprit.

### 1.1. NEGOTIATION

Read this:

'Adventurers, you find yourself in the port town of Olin. Though the developing economical structure has done much for the city, life here is still not perfect. Due to its close proximity to the marshes, plenty of disease-spreading insects and sea-brought vermin infest the slums, spreading sickness to unsuspecting people. And it is because of such an illness that a devoted shoemaker by the name of Heron Lestrade has requested your aid. Now, on a rainy day, not too late in the afternoon, you find yourself in his home, having found a small piece of paper requesting aid on a questboard. And here you are.'

First, describe how moments after knocking on the door, the door opens and the party meets Heron Lestrade. Describe him, then proceed by letting the party into the house.

#### HERON LESTRADE

**Information:** An older-looking man, maybe in his mid-to-late forties. His eyes are red and the bags beneath them large. His clothes look ragged and loosely fitted, while looking like not enough to cover the cold winds of Olin. His hairline is far gone and only a patchy head and beard adorn him. He looks ravaged with sadness and exhaustion.

Lestrade will put his hands on his face, wiping away the tears, before welcoming the party into his home, telling them to follow him, but not take their shoes off.

Read this:

'You follow the old man, onlooking the dirty wooden floorboards, as he leads you into a small antichamber, a mix between a kitchen and a living room, with only a wooden table and two wooden stools as furniture, alongside a fireplace and a few sacks in which you spot various foods. He takes a look at you all, before fetching a dark green bottle off the floor. He opens it and smells it, before handing it to you with a sad look. "I'm sorry I don't have any glasses. I don't have much need for them. But this is good wine, I promise. I'd feel ashamed to not treat my guests with anything. In any way... Who are you, might I ask?" He passes the bottle, then looks at the party inquisitively.'

**GM NOTE:** Offer the party time to introduce themselves to him, as well as the other players, in case you are playing this as a one-shot. In case this is the start of a new campaign, consider that maybe the adventurers all saw the paper individually and have all gathered to help. Either way, this is a good spot for players to reveal their characters' appearance and even chat a little.

After he has learned who the players are, Lestrade will explain his situation in more detail. His daughter suffers from a very severe illness, which no clerics or paladins could have cured. She has been admitted into the clinic for the past few months and she is indeed doing better. In order to keep her in the clinic and on her treatment, he has to pay the clinic 300 gold a month, as it is very demanding. Over the past months, he has sold almost everything, including his life savings, and he works 20 hours a day to make enough money to pay up. Shoemaking isn't the best, but it works.

All he has is this small house with 2 rooms and the furniture inside it. But then, 2 nights ago, the house was robbed. The money he had saved up for the next 2 months is gone. Scared, he posted up signs, then sold his cutlery, his coat and a bunch of other things in an attempt to make due. He has gathered 100 gold. He will explain to the party that he had saved up 550 gold before it was stolen. If they find the gold, he'll give them the 100 he doesn't need as recompense. If not, his daughter will be taken out of the clinic and is sure to die. He NEEDS help.

Once the party has agreed to help, he will thank them deeply and ask them to come with, as he moves to a second room. Proceed to the next chapter.

## 1.2. CRIME SCENE

Read this:

'You move back into the hallway, then you are led into a small bedchamber, with only a small, 1 person mattress, a wooden chest and a pile of clothes, alongside a set of cobbler's tools you reckon he uses for his business. Left in the corner, you see a longsword, left alongside a small medal. There might be a few things worth examining around here...'

The party may now investigate the area. Before they do, Lestrade will tell them two days ago it was raining and he did find boot-tracks, which he, as a shoemaker, identified as being pretty large in size, definitively bigger than that of a normal human.

**GM NOTE:** The following investigation is filled with ability checks and it is highly likely that a low level party might miss a few of them. In case they seem to get lost, give them subtle hints through Lestrade, who will not disturb the room in any way, but will await there and aid. This should be enough guidance. Also, remind the players of the Help action, or guidance cantrip, as giving advantage and 1d4 might sometimes be extremely helpful.

First, the party can inspect the room with a **DC 14 (Wisdom) Perception check**. On a success, they will recognize that there seems to be a small cut on the doorframe, where a piece of fabric, mixed with blood, is stuck in a loose strip of wood. Upon finding this, any party member may make a **DC 13 (Wisdom) Insight check**, trying to discern what happened. On a success, they can deduce that someone, most likely wide in size, hit their shoulder against the doorframe, breaking bits of their clothing and leaving their blood behind. The blood in question, color-wise, is a shade of purple. With this information, alongside the footprints being large, the party can deduce with a successful **DC 14 (Intelligence) Nature check** that the culprit is of orcish or half-orcish descent.

Then, having found the fabric, the party may make a **DC 16 (Intelligence) Investigation check** to inspect it. On a success, they will smell the slightest hint of tobacco. They can then make a **DC 15 (Wisdom) Survival check** to look about the room, they will find other small patches of cigarette ashes. These ashes can further be examined with a **DC 16 (Intelligence) Nature check**. On a success, they will smell the ashes and realise that this is a rare tobacco, most likely contraband. Any party member with a criminal background instantly succeeds this check. Upon realising it is contraband, they may make a **DC 17 (Intelligence) History check** to think of possible locations where this type of tobacco is sold. On a successful check, they think of the Snake Skull Saloon. Any character with a criminal background instantly succeeds this check.

**GM NOTE:** If the party recognizes the contraband, but no one can remember the saloon, tell them they can ask around. When leaving the house, and in the next chapter, they can make a **DC 12 (Charisma) Deception, Intimidation or Persuasion check** to ask around, finding the name of the saloon on a success.

The party can also investigate the chest with a **DC 14 (Intelligence) Investigation check**. On a successful check, they'll see the lock was broken off, rather than being picked. Inside the chest nothing is found, except for a small, but instantly noticeable bit of tobacco ash.

## CHAPTER 1.3. OUT AND ABOUT

Read this:

'With the investigation of the house finished, you take your work to the streets, trudging along through the rainy atmosphere of Olin and in search of more clues and maybe, possibly, a culprit.'

**GM NOTE:** This is the perfect place to introduce the check needed for finding the Saloon.

Just in case the party found no immediate clues regarding the saloon, read this:

'You walk through the rain, having not too much to show for yourself, but you slowly hear the trickle start getting louder and louder. Without much pause, the light rain of the town begins to strengthen, turning into a full-on storm, with the only immediate place to hide under the roof of being a nearby wooden building, with a large sign that reads "The Sneak Skull Saloon".

But, in case the party has found clues, read this:

'You walk through the rain, looking eagerly around for what you know to be the saloon in question. As you continue your track, the rain begins to pick up, with thunder roaring in the distance. Soon, a storm will be upon you, and you watch as the townsfolk retreat under their thatched roofs. You also notice, not too far in the distance, the large, imposing building, with a wooden sign that reads "The Sneak Skull Saloon".

With the party approaching the saloon, you may proceed to the next chapter.



## CHAPTER 2. THE SALOON

In which the party learns a little more about where their target comes from.

### 2.1. NOT FROM AROUND HERE

Read this:

'The moment you step in, you notice a motley crowd. The large, open design of the saloon gives way to an elongated bar in the distance. Inside, dressed in blacks and browns, half-orcs, tieflings and a few other races watch you eagerly. At the bar, a snake-like skinned individual, with white hair and yellow, silted eyes, looks at you intently. The orcs all look at you, but then turn away. You get the sense you are not seen too well.'

The party now finds themselves in the saloon, but the atmosphere is still tense. Bring them to map 1, but they cannot access any areas beside the bar just yet.

#### 2.1.1 BOTHERING THE PATRONS

If they approach any table, the patrons will tell them to piss off. If they bother any patrons a second time, this will trigger the combat, as they are attacked by 3 **thugs**, all of which are half-orcs. After this fight, proceed to the next chapter.

#### 2.1.2 BOTHERING THE BARKEEP

If instead the party goes to the bar, introduce them to the barkeep, Zihiss.

#### ZIHISS

**Information:** Not too talkative and very akin to running her own establishment, Zihiss only says what's necessary to keep people off her trail. She's a good friend of most gang leaders within the city, but she doesn't do that by letting outsiders in.

The party may ask for information regarding the tobacco or the theft, but must make a **DC 20 (Charisma) Intimidation, Deception or Persuasion check** to have her cooperate. If they are successful, she will say that she does indeed sell such tobacco, but she doesn't know who stole what, neither is she prone to giving out the name of her clients. A second attempt prompting her to speak will require a successful **DC 18 (Charisma) Intimidation, Deception or Persuasion check**, and she will reveal she does know who is likely to have done it, but won't give the name out herself. Despite this, she knows who might, and she tells the party to go upstairs.

If at any point the party fails a check, she will tell her patrons to rough them up. **3 thugs**, all half-orcs, will approach and tell the party "You're not from around here... so bugged off!" They will then attack the party. After this fight, proceed to the next chapter.

If the party doesn't fail any checks and do not prompt a fight, proceed to the next chapter after they finish the talk with Zihiss.

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### MAP 1: PUB, FIRST FLOOR





## 2.2. LOOKING ABOUT

If the players fought, read this:

'You breathe in deep and watch around. As you fought, none of the patrons seem to have even flinched, in fact, they all drink their drinks, with a slight smile on their faces. Behind you, the bartender claps three times in mocking, before saying. "You've earned your ssssstay. What drink do you want?" She then begins taking out steins for you, as the patrons turn back to their business, no longer bothered. You then hear laughter, as a tiefling figure with black skin looks at you from above. "Hey, you all! Come here for a second!" He then leans back to his table from over the banister.'

If the players didn't fight, read this:

'You watch as Zihiss stretches out her back, before clapping three times. Instantly, all patrons look towards her, keeping on their mean faces. She bellows out. "No problem with these. Treat them like friends of the house, yes boys?" Subsequently, you see almost everyone nod in acknowledgement. Everyone takes their mean looks off and goes back to their business, as if you were here all along.'

Now, the players may access all the areas of the saloon.

### AREAS OF SNAKE SKULL SALOON

#### 1 - POOL TABLE

Players can approach the pool table and choose to play. If they do, they must put 5 gold forward as a starting bet, then make a **DC 14 Dexterity check**. On a success, they win 10 gold. On a failure, they lose their bet gold.

**GM NOTE:** You can also use this table to provide some flavourful interaction to relieve tension or even provide worldbuilding, in case this adventure is part of a larger campaign.

#### 2 - BAR

At the bar, Zihiss will provide the party with drinks. They can also ask around for contraband. If they do, they must make a **DC 14 (Charisma) Persuasion check**. On a success, she'll tell them she has a *potion of healing* and a *scroll of invisibility* for sale. The potion goes for 35 gold, while the scroll goes for 120.

#### 3 - TABLES

At all of the tables, all manner of crooks sit around, drinking and smoking, but none of them are smoking the found contraband tobacco. If any of them are provided with the fabric, they can be persuaded to say who has it with a **DC 14 (Charisma) Persuasion check** or with a 5 gold bribe. If persuaded, they will point to the second level, where "the tiefling" smokes this type of tobacco.

## 4 - KIND LADIES

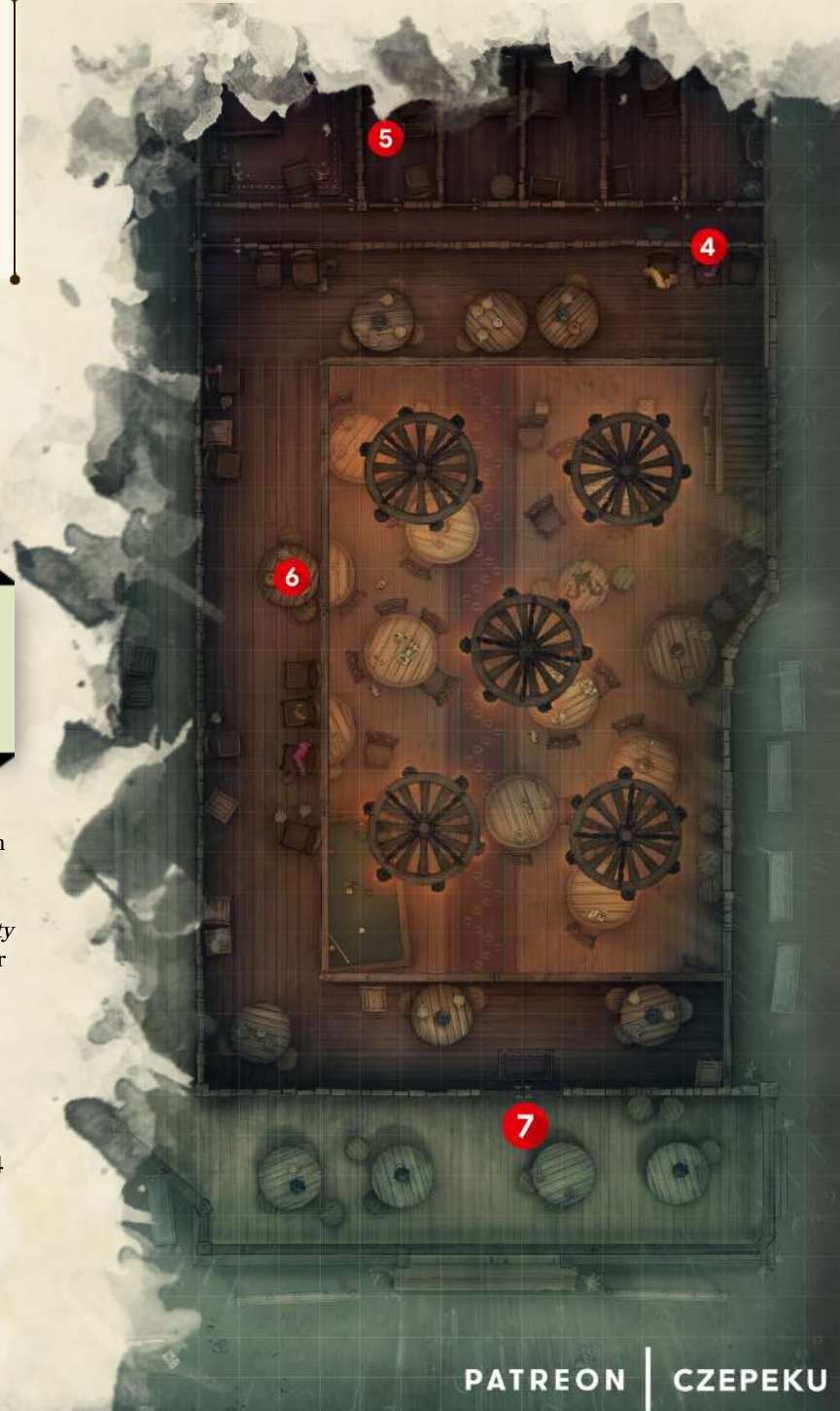
Read this:

'Going upstairs, you immediately notice a few stools, on each of which beautiful women and men of various races await in extravagant clothing, all smiling and winking at you.'

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### MAP 2: PUB, SECOND FLOOR



**GM NOTE:** If you like extra roleplay flavour to your adventures, consider describing the escort's races! Maybe you'll learn the preferences of a party member. Maybe you can even give these people backstories, motivations and have them be romantic interests.

The party can "enjoy the company" of any of these people for 5 gold, which will then take them through the hallway and towards the bedrooms, into the free bedroom (area 5). While passing by, the players will hear the "sound of company" from the other rooms.

If asked about any information, the escorts will say they'll "only talk while in their room".

## 5 - ROOM

This area can only be accessed if in the company of an escort.

Read this: (the following assumes the chosen escort is a lady)

'Your escort of choice takes you with elegant steps and longing looks over to a small chamber, barely big enough to store a bed, a bedside chamber and a small table. There, she turns around with a smile. "What do you wish for, dear?" She says, with a lascive smile.'

While within the room, the lady will either do her business or can be persuaded to give out information. If they ask about the fabric and/or the tobacco, they'll say that recently, a young half-orc boy who always comes around has been a little restless. His name is Brass around here, although they don't know if that's his real name. He usually moves all around, but he frequently talks to the tiefling known as "Laughter", who sits at the same table all the time.

## 6 - TIEFLING'S TABLE

Read this:

'You approach the table of the dark-skinned tiefling, who begins laughing in between puffs of a cigarette. The smell of his tobacco is familiar, a bit too much so, as he gestures towards the seats of his table. "What can I help you with, friends?" He chuckles, as he's already in the process of rolling another cigarette.'

When the party reaches this table, you may proceed to the next chapter.

## 7 - BALCONY

Read this:

'Partially covered, the balcony is empty despite all of this, since the cold is pretty jarring. Here, you reckon, is where bad deals are made.'

The party can invite Laughter here and he will accept, because he is smug and confident.

## 2.3. A MAN WITH A PLAN

The tiefling introduces himself as Laughter ( **bandit** ).

### LAUGHTER

**Information:** Treating everything as a joke, always calm, always laughing and having no loyalty at all, Laughter has been a crook his entire life. And that's just how he wants to live. What matters is what's best for him.

He's a minor thief and all-around shady person, but he's not particularly loyal. If the party asks him if he knows anything, he'll immediately say he'll help for a price. The price he asks for is 25 gold. A successful **DC 15 (Charisma) Intimidation or Persuasion check** can make him lower his price to 18, but no lower.

The party can now choose to either pay him or attempt to fight him. If they aggress him while inside the bar, a **thug** from another table will come to his aid. Alternatively, the party can take him upstairs, to the balcony, where they can beat him up alone.

**GM NOTE:** Give the thug a 1 or 2 turn delay before approaching, and have Laughter primarily dodge strikes, as to not knock down the party, since it is very likely they are already a little beat up.

If he is paid or if he gets beat up, he'll say he knows the exact person who did, who is a man by the name of Brass. He is a young half-orc with brass tusks. He will also tell the party he is willing to hand Brass in without a shred of loyalty.

If the party wants him to do this, he begins to chuckle. Read this:

'As you tell Laughter that you wish him to hand in Brass, he takes in a big puff of smoke. "Fine by me. Poor by him... Orphan boy... wanted to make a difference. Anyway, I don't care. Meet me in the plaza, near the well, in about an hour and a half. I'll get you the man." He then stands up and begins walking away while laughing lowly.'

If the party instead does not want Laughter to help them, he'll then say "Good luck finding him! He tends to be around the plaza, near the well. I couldn't care less."

You may proceed to the next chapter.



## CHAPTER 3. RAINY DAYS

In which the party meets the culprit, but are faced with a dilemma.

### CHAPTER 3.1. IN THE RAIN

Read this:

'An hour later, you find yourself moving to and fro the main plaza, despite the heavy rain, as you await the coming of this enigmatic figure, who has only been identified by his Brass tusks. You move around, alone, as everyone seems to have retreated from the plaza, which is when you begin to hear faint skitters from beneath the cobble of the well, as large rats begin to come out and look towards you.'

Take the party to map 3. The party now encounters **4 giant rats**, all of which begin attacking them angrily.

After they defeat the rats, describe how a large hooded figure, the tusks of which shine in the rain, begins walking by them, not paying attention. This is indeed Brass. If the party confronts him, he will not fight, but will want to talk.

Proceed to the next chapter.

### CHAPTER 3.2. FOR WHEN IT RAINS

Read this:

'A little flustered and a bit angry, the half-orc looks at you with saddened eyes. He looks courageous and ready for a fight, but contains himself. He breathes in deep. "Listen to me. I know what I didn't ain't good. It's not. But I didn't do it for nothing. Come with me and I'll show you. No tricks, I promise. I'll tell you where we're going now. We're going to the Sugarplum Orphanage. I promise." He then looks at all of you intently, but with honest looks.'

Any (**Wisdom**) **Insight check** will reveal he is indeed telling the truth. If the party still doesn't trust him, he'll say that's where the money is and he'll take them there, as he doesn't want trouble.

If the party accepts to go with him, he will slowly lead them to an orphanage.

Read this:

'You follow Brass as he leads you to a large orphanage building, the windows of which are either broken or barely boarded up, the walls of which are cracked and the chimney of which emits no smoke. From inside, you hear shouts and cries. The atmosphere is almost... dystopian. The children inside are skinny, barely any meat on their bones, they look dirty. Yet the childlike excitement is present, most not realising the horror of their situation, or perhaps choosing to ignore it. Brass looks at the windows with a saddened gaze. "I haven't given them the money yet. I was freaking... hesitating. I was scared Sister Asra was gonna ask questions about how I got it. If you want it, it's in a break in a wall... But I grew up here. And the sisters did everything they could, but it was still hell. I only left two years ago and I'm already on the streets. This money could change their lives, you know? Winter's a few weeks away and they'll freeze, some will die. Some of my friends did. Do what you will... But these kids don't deserve this. This... This is hell for them." He speaks with a choked voice, taking out a cigarette and smoking it as if it were a lifeline. You look upon him and the young boy, no older than 18, suddenly doesn't look like that much of a criminal. He sighs deeply. "Do what you will... I'll find a way. I'm worth more aid to them free than in a prison." He says, as he walks towards a crack in the wall, takes out a small bag of gold, takes some out and tosses it at your feet. "You have 100 inside it now. You can take it and walk away from this, the rest goes to these kids and you let me walk. Or you can fight me if you want it all, since I'm not gonna back down from the life of these kids. They deserve it. I don't give a damn who had it before them." He says, as he steadies himself.'

Proceed to the next chapter.

### 3.3. MAKE IT RAIN

First off, if the party wishes to reclaim the rest of the 450 gold, they can choose to fight **Brass** for it. Once brought to below a fourth of his maximum hit points, he'll stop fighting, spit some blood and give the party the money. He'll say "I'm worth more to them alive", before walking away.

As they now have the money, the party can choose to "make it rain". They have three options, all of which will lead to different endings.

**GM NOTE:** There is also a fourth option! In case this adventure is used as part of an on-going campaign (even as a first session!) or the party takes particular liking to all characters, they may attempt to find money in different ways, turning this adventure into a first major goal for the party, because nobody likes a trolley problem (The barkeep could have a job for them for example).





### CHAPTER 3.3.1 KEEP IT ALL!

If the party keeps it all, they are the worst. Well, aside from that, they also gain 550 gold. You can end the adventure by telling them that Lestrade's daughter is dead within a few weeks, then he dies too. The fate of the children in the orphanage? Some don't survive the winter, most end up in gangs and on the streets, as the system cannot take care of them.

### CHAPTER 3.3.2 FOR THE ORPHANAGE

In this option, the party does not fight Brass, but walks away. A few days later, Lestrade ( **veteran** ) finds them with anger and weapons, telling them he figured out what happened and he must fight them, as they didn't help them, but left him hanging.

Once brought to below a fourth of his maximum hit points, he'll stop fighting, spit some blood and let the party go. He'll say "I'm worth more to her alive", before walking away.

## BRASS

Medium humanoid (half-orc), chaotic neutral

**Armor Class** 15 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 59 (7d8 + 28)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Str +6, Con +6

**Skills** Athletics +6

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

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Orcish Made.** Brass can add his Constitution modifier in place of his Dexterity modifier to determine his AC.

## Actions

**Multiattack.** Brass makes a wrestle attack followed by three punch attacks. Or he can make a wrestle attack, two punch attacks and on the move.

**Punch.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Wrestle.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* Creature is grappled or knocked prone, at Brass' choice.

**On The Move.** Brass gains 10 (1d8 + 6) temporary hit points.

## Reactions

**Stay Here!** When a creature provokes an opportunity attack from Brass, Brass can use its reaction to make a wrestle attack followed by a punch attack against that creature.

The children are clothed, fed and taught at new standards and they all become happier, before fully integrating themselves within society. Zoe, Lestrade's daughter, is dead within weeks.

### CHAPTER 3.3.3 FOR ZOE

In this option, the players give the money to Lestrade, who pays them, then gives the rest to Zoe's treatment, who fully recovers. He is ever-thankful to them.

The fate of the children in the orphanage? Some don't survive the winter, most end up in gangs and on the streets, as the system cannot take care of them, feed them, or clothe them.

Regardless of what option they choose, this is where the adventure ends. Brass remains on the streets, Laughter dies, as snitches do get stitches after all, and life goes on...

### MAP CREATED BY [CZEPEKU](#)

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### MAP 3: ALLEY



# THANK YOU !

A big thank you to all of those who follow and support me, without you I couldn't have brought this project to life.

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And now onto the next project...

Cheers !

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**A MASSIVE THANK YOU TO ALL MY PATRONS !**

