

A Gift for a Thief

A short adventure for *Castles & Crusades* / *Hackmaster*

For characters levels 1-3

by J.C. Connors

Adventure Summary

The green dragon Claugyliameter had a valuable possession stolen from her lair recently, and she suspects one of her old agents, a skilled assassin named Fraxus Sinn.

Recently, Fraxus Sinn has recruited a small group of cutthroats and rogues to form a new criminal organization in the Dock Ward of Waterdeep. Simply called “The Green Mongrels,” Fraxus Sinn has set up headquarters inside an abandoned shrine to Loviatar, but Claugyliameter has been unable to divine his location because of the old protective magics on the shrine. Eager for revenge, she contacts some of her agents in the city to offer rewards to any other thieves, rogues, or adventurers that might be willing to seek out Fraxus Sinn and bring him a special “present.”

The Setup — The Ill-faced Wizard

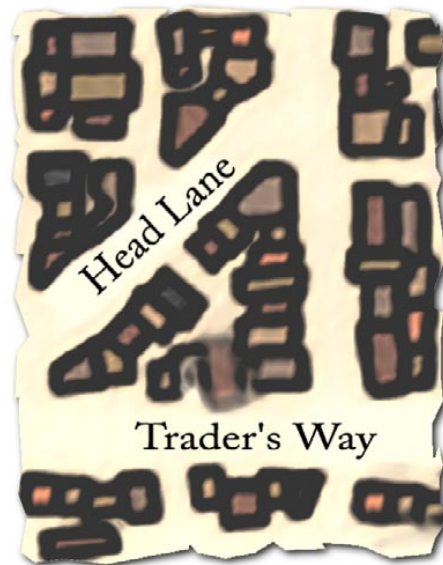
While shopping for goods and arms on Head Lane, the PCs stop to observe a skilled jester performing tricks and acrobatics to the sounds of whimsical music played by a trained, flying monkey. Suddenly, an explosion disturbs the scene as an ugly young man, no doubt a wizard of some sort, appears out of nowhere.

“Citizens of the City of Splendors! You have insulted me, Tobor Freghm for the final time! Time and time again have I walked this lane looking to purchase goods, and time and time again have I been asked to leave because of my ugly visage! No more! Face the Ill-faced Wizard’s wrath!”

With that, several Screaming Meanies appear from nowhere and run amok through the crowd, tossing

their oil bombs to light the street on fire. People run, shouting for the City Watch. Vendors and shopkeepers dash for cover in their stores. Some brave men draw out swords to defend themselves and their families, but it is obvious they are unskilled and slow against such loud dwarf-like creatures who obviously have a vengeance against anything that isn’t on fire.

The PCs performance in the streets will likely catch the eye of one of Claugyliameter’s agents, an elven sorceress named Nomi Star-Imrillia. Even though Claugyliameter’s organization leans towards evil deeds, Nomi joined strictly because of the excitement of working for a dragon for a few years.



The young elven woman with bright green eyes approaches the PCs after the battle. She introduces herself as Nomi, and invites them inside a nearby house for some elven wine. Inside, she shows the PCs a picture of her husband, a young, Elven wizard named Sayzanth. She explains that months ago, her husband, a wizard who was studying at Blackstaff Tower, was kidnapped by thugs one night just outside the tower. For months she heard nothing, but recently got a tip from a street urchin

who claimed the group who kidnapped him was named the “Green Mongrels,” and that he was kidnapped because he had on him a certain magical item that was lent to him by Khelben Blackstaff himself. If pressed, she admits she doesn’t know what the magic item was. She did, however, recently discovered that the Green Mongrels plan on selling her husband as a slave in Skullport within a few days. She desperately wants to buy him back before he can be auctioned to drow, duergar, or even illithids. To this end she has obtained a rare ruby of extraordinary value, and she wishes the PCs to deliver this ruby to the thugs’ leader, Fraxus Sinn, in exchange for her husband.

7 Screaming Meanies (XP 35, AL CE, AC 13, Base Attack +1, MV 12”; HD 1d8; SZ M, #AT 1; D 1d8 (broad axe); SA: Oil bombs (1d6-2 dmg in 10’ radius); SD nil; Severity: d10)

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1 Vengeful Screaming Meanie Captain (XP 37, AL CE, AC 13, Base Attack +1, MV 12”; HD 1d8; SZ M, #AT 1; D 1d10+1 (+1 jendo hammer); SA: Vengeful Rage (+2 to hit, +1 damage, +1 save for 4d4 rounds); SD nil; Severity: d10)

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If asked about the “Ill-faced Wizard” who attacked the street, she’ll explain that he was a rude and haughty man who used to live on this street. For months he insulted every shopkeeper, spoke down to every child, and made rude advances on every young woman. Eventually, people called him the “Ill-faced Wizard” and mocked him to his face. The jester outside, Nomi explains, was the source of many songs about exceedingly-ugly wizards. Eventually, even the jester was outdone when a minor illusionist placed a perfect facsimile of the wizard’s head in the latrine in a nearby tavern. Nomi laughs, “supposedly, it even sang to you when you sprinkled it!”

Everyone was pleased when the wizard left the town to move elsewhere. He swore revenge, but nobody really took him seriously until today. She shrugs, “we probably won’t see him again.”

Nomi doesn’t know where her husband is being held; she suspects it’s somewhere in the city at the Green Mongrel’s Lair. She suggests the PCs visit a section of town of ill-repute to dig up more information. She

promises she’ll give the PCs the ruby once they discover the location of her husband; then they can do the transaction. In exchange for their service, she swears that her husband can reward them with alchemical or enchanted items, or even entry into the Blackstaff Tower as an apprentice, something that might appeal to wizards and illusionists in the party.

Knockfell Alley

An Intelligence check (rogues and assassins may add their level) will find a local contact that has heard of the Green Mongrels. He suggests the PCs visit Knockfell Alley, a rough alley in the Dock Ward where he’s seen some markings of the Green Mongrels.

Knockfell Alley is a wretched place. A dead body lies half-naked in the streets. A blind dwarf, his hands amputated, sits against an old building begging for hand-outs. Street toughs immediately start tailing the PCs the moment they enter the alley, demanding to know their business.

The three street toughs will respond well to intimidation, bribery (at least 25 gp), or something that looks like powerful magic. If they’re cornered and scared, they’ll point to the blind dwarf (“Blinders”) and tell the PCs to talk to him. If the PCs attack them with deadly force, they’ll flee but return in ten minutes with 1d6 additional friends.

Other NPCs on the block will also point the PCs to “Blinders” the mutilated dwarf. “He may be blind, but he hears everything,” they tell.

3 Street Toughs (XP 35, AL CN, AC 12, Base Attack +0, MV 12”; HD 1d8; SZ M, #AT 1; D 1d6 (club); SA: Nil; SD: Nil; Severity: d8)

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- 22 gp
- Stolen Minuteglass (2 gp)
- Stolen Silver Seal (5 gp)

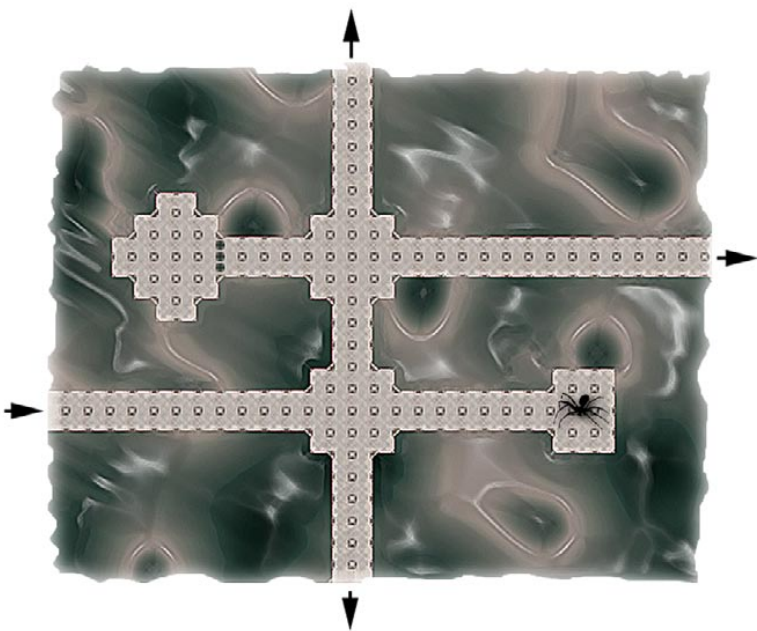
Blinders will ask for a donation for his services. Placing a few gold coins in his cup will please him, and he'll do what he can to answer their questions. If asked about the Green Mongrels, he'll say that he's heard about them, and that they're led by a newcomer named Fraxus Sinn. He's severely disliked amongst the Plague Rats, and the PCs should seek out one of the Plague Rats named Fetchegg; he's one of the Plague Rats' informers in the area, and he likely knows where to find Fraxus and the Green Mongrels. Fetchegg hangs out in the sewers near here. "Just climb on down," says the old dwarf, "and he'll find ya."

The Sewers

A quick search of the area will find an old sewer grate; it has been recently locked with a City Watch-branded padlock. It must be picked, cut off, or magically unlocked to grant entry into the sewers.

The sewers of Waterdeep are enormous, 20-foot wide tiled tunnels. The loud noise of rushing water gives a -4 penalty to any kind of hearing-based checks. Fortunately, the area underneath Knockfell Alley isn't particularly labyrinthine.

The players will enter the sewers from the west. The passages that lead to the north, south, and east all lead to the rest of the Waterdhavian sewer system – the sheer length of these tunnels will give the PCs some idea that they're likely heading out in the wrong direction.



1 Adherer Mummy (XP 400, AL LE, AC 17, Base Attack +4, MV 9"; HD 4d8; SZ M, #AT 1; D 1d6-3; SA: Adhering attack (+8 to hit; sticks victim to the mummy, where the mummy can drag him off at Movement 4"; 30% chance the victim will be unable to attack); SD: immune to 1st level spells except Magic Missile (3d6 damage); any melee hit does half damage and sticks the weapon; Severity: d10)

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1 Huge Spider (XP 270, AL N, AC 14, Base Attack +2, MV 18"; HD 2d8+2; SZ M, #AT 1; D 1d6; SA: Surprise; Poison (the poison does 2d4 damage for 2d6 rounds, or only 1d4-1 damage if the victim saves versus poison at +1); SD: nil; Severity: d10)

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Fetchigg's lair is in the large, round chamber depicted on the map below. A large, heavy portcullis keeps intruders (and wandering monsters) out of his abode. He's also spent a lot of gold on a special guardian – an Adherer Mummy that lurks in the ceilings of the sewer, and has been trained to grab a victim and haul him back to the smaller rectangular chamber in the south-east, which is home to a huge spider.

Fetchigg is currently in his lair, but won't bother to check out what's going on if he hears the mummy or spider attacking something; that happens all the time down here.

If the PCs defeat the mummy, Fetchigg will be very angry and demand repayment for him. It cost him 1,000 gp down in Skullport, and he's going to want a new one before he agrees to help anyone. Once that is settled, Fetchigg will (safely behind his portcullis bars) listen to the PC's plight. If they are honest with him, he'll gladly help them fight off the Green Mongrels... for a price. His brother Pensigg has been arrested by the City Watch for burglary, and is waiting trial. If the PCs go to the authorities and be his alibi by swearing that they were with Pensigg the night of the crime, he will be released. Then, and only then, will Fetchigg agree to tell the location of the Green Mongrels' headquarters.

1 Fetchigg - Were-Rat (XP 270, AL LE, AC 12/13/14, Base Attack +3, MV 12”; HD 3d8+1; SZ M, #AT 1; D 1d6 or 1d6-4; SA: 1% chance of lycanthropy per point of damage; summon 2d6 giant rats; SD silver or +1 to hit; immune to charm; Severity: d10)

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2-12 Giant Rats (XP 9, AL NE, AC 13, Base Attack +1, MV 12”; HD 1d4+8; SZ S, #AT 1; D 1d6-2, SA: Disease; SD: Nil; Severity: d8)

- 2000 ep; 14 sp; this is locked in a chest trapped with a poison needle loaded with spider venom (2d4 damage for 2d6 rounds, or only 1d4-1 damage if the victim saves versus poison at +1).
- Cursed Scroll of Awful Rhymes (Character must always talk in rhymes)
- Cloak of Displacement (1,500 xp; 30,000 gp)

If the PCs despise this sort of bartering, they can take Fetchigg by force. He’s a coward at heart, though a well-protected one. His portcullis is very heavy (-4 to lift) and he has trapped it with a shock spell that will do 1d8+2 damage to anyone who tries). He is skinny enough to slip in and back in rat-form without problem.

The Trial of Pensigg

If the PCs agree to Fetchigg’s demands, they’ll have to report to the palace in the Castle Ward by mid-afternoon the next day. Pensigg is due to be dragged before one of the three on-duty black-robed Magisters, where they will pass judgment on him immediately. As long as the PCs vouch for his whereabouts on the night of the burglary, he will be released; he’ll scurry away without so much of a thank you to the PCs.

His brother released, Fetchigg will tell the PCs that he’s heard that the Green Mongrels have set up headquarters in an old temple of Loviatar on the edge of the Temple Ward. Apparently, the priestesses of Loviatar deemed the temple “unclean” several years ago, and though they plan on “cleaning” it, the Green Mongrels felt the place was perfect for their business since its magical wards keep them out of the prying eyes of any wizards.

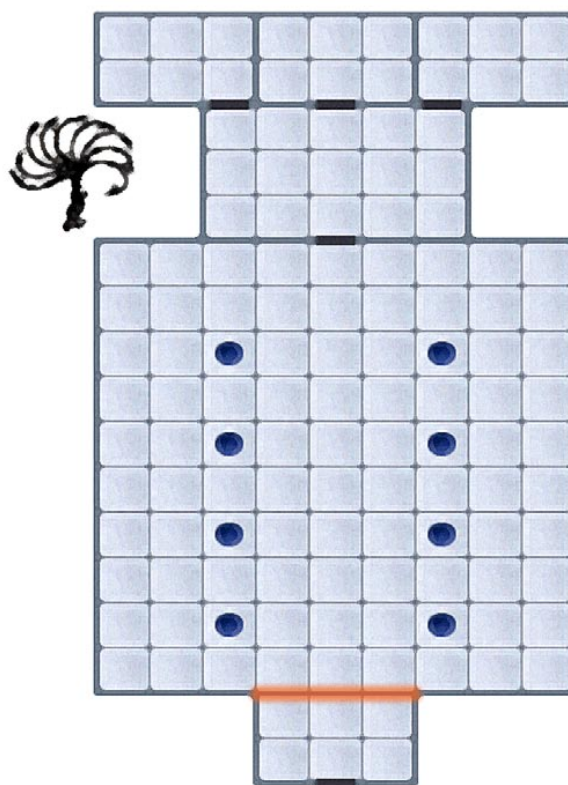
If Nomi hears about this news, she’ll be elated and give

the PCs the large ruby. It is inscribed with a strange lettering. If the letters can be deciphered, it reads “A Gift from Claugiyliameter.” She wishes the PCs good luck in finding and returning her husband, and also asks them to return her husband’s ring, if at all possible.

The ring, of course, is actually the property of Claugiyliameter, and is the reason she hates Fraxus Sinn so much. It is a Ring of Spell-Storing; while not particularly useful to the dragon (it’s more the idea of him stealing from her that irks her so much), Fraxus Sinn enjoys fancying himself a mage. Clever PCs can pick up on Nomi’s mistruths – she previously said she didn’t know what the magic item was that her “husband” had on him – but she’ll do her best to talk her way out of it, even hinting at the real truth of the situation if it looks like the PCs will still help her.

The Temple of Loviatar

On the edge of the old Temple Ward, this old shrine is wedged between two buildings; one sells robes and garments, the other is a chain manufacturer. If either place is asked about the shrine, the shopkeepers will vaguely recall small people, dwarves they think, going in and out of the building at odd hours.



3 Dark Folk - Dark Creepers (XP 120, AL CN, AC 12, Base Attack +1, MV 12”; HD 1d8+1; SZ S, #AT 1; D 1d4; SA: Create Darkness 50’ Radius (3x each day); Detect Magic 15’ Radius (3x each day); SD: In shadowy areas or darkness, AC 20; when dead, creepers explode in a 10’ radius of light, blinding any who fail a Con save for 1d6 turns; Severity: d10)

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□ 300 gp

The eldest of the Dark Creepers carries two special items:

- Platinum Chain (37 pp)
- Ring of Mind Shielding (500 xp, 5000 gp)

Fraxus Sinn - Dark Stalker (XP 289, AL CN, AC 12, Base Attack +2, MV 12”; HD 2d8+1; SZ M, #AT 1; D 1d6; SA: Short Sword Expertise (+1 to hit with short-swords); Wall of Fog (2x each day); Create Darkness 50’ Radius (3x each day); Detect Magic 15’ Radius (3x each day); SD: In shadowy areas or darkness, AC 20; when dead, stalkers explode in a 3d6 fireball (save versus arcane magic for half damage); Severity: d12+4)

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- 150 gp
- Shortsword of Sharpness +1 (+4 severity)
- Ring of Spell-Storing (2,500 xp; 22,500 gp); holds 3 wizard spells, including Hold Portal (1st), Monster Summoning I (3rd), and Guards and Wards (6th).

The entrance to the temple is guarded by a strange, orange light, impenetrable to vision. When visitors approach the light, a harsh female voice will tell them: “Subject thyself to Loviatar! Share in her pain!” Visitors are completely unable to pass without a Dispel Magic or similar spell, though an Intelligence check (clerics may add their level) will reveal that the Maiden of Pain likely requires some form of self-sustained injury before entering. Indeed, if players injure themselves with at least 1 point of damage, they’ll be able to pass into the main chamber.

The inside of the temple common area is strewn with old, broken crates, chairs, and tattered robes. Standing near the back of the room are two Dark Creepers, dwarf-like creatures with long noses, dressed in black robes. In somber voices, they demand to know who

has entered the chambers of Fraxus Sinn, leader of the Green Mongrels.

These guards are used to visitors; Fraxus Sinn has seen many rogues over the last few days as he extends his influence over this district of the city. The Dark Creeper guards will give away no information about their master, only that he is a great man, and that they must disarm themselves and subject to a search if they wish an audience with Fraxus Sinn.

Fraxus Sinn’s audience chamber is the center room in the temple. The door is magically enchanted to only admit those who know the password (“Maiden of Pain, Daughter of Woe” – he paid off an old cleric of Loviatar for the information...).

The audience chamber has a large, onyx throne on it, emblazoned with the symbols of Loviatar. There, with another, elder Dark Creeper bodyguard, Fraxis Sinn holds court. He is a Dark Stalker, a creature half-man, half-shadow. He is hooded, and his face is hard to make out underneath it. He speaks with a smooth, charismatic voice. He is intrigued to hear about the story of Nomi, and laughs at the PCs, telling them that he is above petty kidnapping. However, the rare ruby arouses his greed, and he wishes to see it more closely. Unless the PCs insist that he personally handle it, Fraxis will ask one of his guards to bring it to him. The touch of a Dark Folk causes the ruby to explode in a brilliant light, doing 4d6 damage to the Creeper as well as anyone in a 10-foot radius (a Dexterity save will halve damage).

If Fraxis is still alive, he howls in anger and activates a hidden pit trap in the floor, dropping anyone in the center of the room into a hard, stone pit 20’ down for 2d6 damage. With that, he draws his magical blade and attacks any who avoided the trap. If all the PCs are trapped, he seals up the pit and sends out his creepers to Skullport to purchase a suitable dark-seeing monster to drop down into the pit with them.

If Fraxis does not survive the attack, his guards will immediately spring into action, trying to cut down the PCs before they escape.

The other two rooms in the temple are sparse. One is the room of the creepers; it has three makeshift beds as well as a torture chamber left over from the temple’s

past. Buried in a drawer amongst some rusty blades are 183 pp. In the other room, which serves as Fraxis' bed chamber, the PCs can find some old texts (most of which are devoted to Loviatar), a bed, and a small coffer hidden in a floorboard. It contains 90 pp and a smoky quartz worth about 50 gp. It also contains a small note, written to Claugiyliameter:

Claugiyliameter—

Surely you're not still mad over that bauble I took. I would imagine someone as aged and well-bred as yourself wouldn't erupt into such hostility over this minor possession. Please stop sending your agents to kill me; it should be obvious I am above their skills by now. After all, haven't I trained a great many of them? Since you never paid me for that training, accept it now as fair exchange for the ring.

—Fraxis Sinn

The Conclusion

The PCs may, or may not have figured out Nomi's deception. If the PCs killed Fraxis Sinn, she is pleased and offers a reward; membership in the agents of Claugiyliameter (she will explain her original plan, though she will try to keep Claugiyliameter's true identity as a dragon secret for the moment) as well as an alchemist's bag. This magical bag holds 6 potions and keeps them completely safe from most forms of destruction. Inside the PCs will find Oil of Etherealness, Oil of Slipperiness, Potion of Gaseous Form, and 3 Potions of Healing.

If the PCs chase away Fraxis, she will be displeased but hide it amiably. She retains her story and wonders aloud whether or not her husband can be saved from Skullport. She does not wish the PCs to try to save him, however. She will, however, reward them with 3 choices from the above potions for their efforts.

About this Adventure

This adventure uses the basic *Castles & Crusades* system, with a few modifications from *Hackmaster*. Namely:

- Small monsters receive a +10 hp kicker. Medium monsters (and PCs!) receive a +20 hp kicker.
- Some monsters, magic items, and spells are taken from the *Hackmaster Player's Handbook*, though GMs are free to change them to something more suitable to his campaign.
- Monsters have a critical hit "Severity" listed. For simplicity's sake, this is bonus damage the creature inflicts on a natural to hit roll of 20. A more detailed, *Hackmaster*-inspired system can be found at www.threefates.com.
- XP values are *Hackmaster* ones, which tend to be higher than official *Castles & Crusades* values.
- *Hackmaster* players can likely use this adventure as is, noting that monsters' Armor Classes are high (convert to *Hackmaster* AC with (20 - AC), so an AC 12 Dark Creeper in this adventure converts to an AC 8 *Hackmaster* Dark Creeper).

Nomi Star-Imrillia, 4th Level Elf Illusionist (XP 310, AL N, AC 10, Base Attack +1, MV 12"; HD 4d4; SZ M, #AT 1; D 1d6-1; SA: Nil; SD Nil; Severity: d8). Carries dagger +1.

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Spells:

Phantom Armor (1st) - Creates AC 17 illusory armor, though it can be disbelieved with a Wis save. If caster is hit, absorbs 1 point of damage, up to caster's level, at which point it dissipates.

Color Spray (1st) - Cone affects up to caster's level foes. HD 1-2 foes are unconscious for 2d4 rounds; HD 3-4 are blinded for 1d4 rounds; HD 5+ are stunned for 1 round. Only foes same level as caster (or HD 5+) may save.

Glitterdust (2nd) - Creates a 10' radius cloud of glittering particles. Those within must Save versus spells or be blinded and suffer -4 to hit, AC, and saves for 1d4+1 rounds. The glitter itself fades after 1d4 rounds, +1 per level of the caster.