

THE SCHOLAR'S RESCUE



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The Scholar's Rescue

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The Scholar's Rescue

Background

The Iron Lantern Guild has lost one of their own — Alric Duskvale, a scholar researching ruins outside of town. The guild hires the characters to bring him back alive.

Hook (Read Aloud)

"A messenger from the Iron Lantern Guild approaches you with urgency. 'A scholar of ours, Alric Duskvale, has not returned from the old watchtower. Bring him back alive, and the guild will see you rewarded. Will you accept?'"

The messenger doesn't know anything beyond what the message says. If prompted they offer to read the message again. If the players agree, they are given directions to the ruined tower a half-day away.

The Ruined Watchtower

The watchtower is crumbling, but torchlight flickers within. Its front gate is barred from the inside.

(Read Aloud)

"The ruined tower leans forward like a broken tooth. Torchlight glows faintly through cracked stone. The heavy doors are shut tight."

Approaches

- Smash the doors: automatic success, but enemies are ready — no surprise.
- Climb the rubble wall: DC 10 Athletics, enters quietly.
- Search for another way: DC 12 Investigation, find a side entrance — gives the party surprise.

The Bandit's Demand

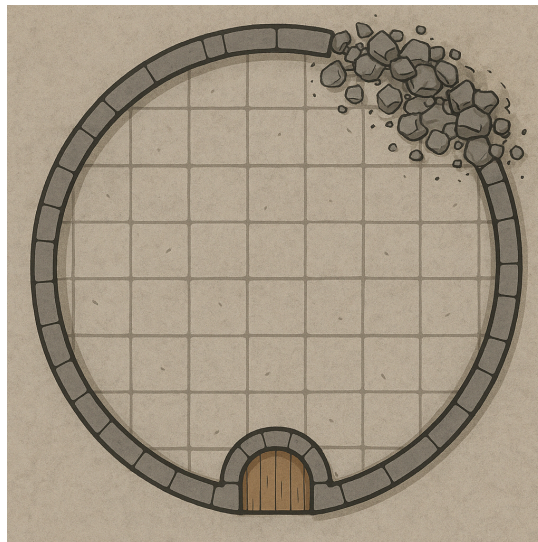
When the party enters, the bandits sneer and gesture toward the gagged scholar.

(Read Aloud)

“A thin, weary man lies bound in the corner. Three thugs stand between you and him. One steps forward with a dagger and grins. ‘You want this bookworm back? He’ll cost you 500 gold. Pay up now, or he bleeds.’”

Notes:

The ransom is far more than any level-1 PC can afford. If the players try to negotiate, the bandits mock them. If the players stall too long, the thugs attack.



The Fight

Weak Bandit (Thug-in-Training)

Medium humanoid (any), chaotic neutral

Armor Class: 11 (leather scraps)

Hit Points: 5 (1d8+1)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR 11 (+0), DEX 11 (+0), CON 12 (+1), INT 9 (-1), WIS 9 (-1), CHA 10 (+0)

Senses: passive Perception 9

Challenge: 0 (10 XP)

Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage.

Encounter: 3 weak bandits, balanced for 3 level-1 characters. They fight until 2 are down, then the last tries to flee.

The Rescue

After the fight, the characters free Alric Duskvale.

(Read Aloud)

“The scholar coughs as the gag is removed. His voice is hoarse. ‘My gratitude. I must return to town to recover... and to review my notes. When I am ready, I may have a task for you. Something far greater.’”

Rewards

Guild payment: 15 gp total to each character (or a small favor owed).

XP: Each character receives 50 xp for surviving the adventure + 100 xp for rescuing the scholar

Future Hook: Alric’s research hints at a hidden ruin nearby.