

THE CAPPO IN THE WOODS

Will the characters survive the assassination attempt on the gnome crime boss?

Hook

A quaint and comfortable looking tavern offers the characters rest and food after a long day's journey.

Backstory

Charuvat "Charu" Parekh has led the Hollowfield Saints thieves guild since he was a young gnome. In those decades, the Saints pushed out numerous rival gangs, sometimes through diplomacy other times through bloodshed, though every time, Charu rose in status. As a result, there are few gangs in the realm that wield even half the power that Charu does in his tiny hands. Despite his success, the stress of leading the guild has taken a heavy toll on the gnome. Well into the second half of his life, Charu's health and hair have worsened just as his weight has increased. More and more he turns the reigns of the guild over to his lieutenants and retreats to the Loose Noodle, a tavern and safe house for members of the guild deep in the wilderness. There he spends his days reading and listening to his niece play beautiful songs on her harp. Unfortunately, his pattern of leaving the city has not gone unnoticed by his enemies.

Encounter

This encounter begins as the characters come upon the Loose Noodle just as the sun is starting to set:

The setting sun illuminates the thin trail of smoke rising from the chimney of a small, two-story cut timber and stone tavern up ahead. The sound of a harp carries through an open window, bringing with it the savory aroma of roasted quail and freshly baked bread. A simple rail fence keeps the forest at bay, and a large dog is stretched out on the front porch.

When the characters enter the tavern, read:

Within, an elderly elf with a trembling jaw tends the bar while a young female gnome plucks away at a beautiful harp. Beside her, a heavysset, balding gnome reclines in an overstuffed chair next to a crackling fire. He reads from a well-worn book that he holds in fingers wrapped in silver rings set with large emeralds. In the back corner, three men are drinking and playing cards.

Hollowfield Saints. The old gnome by the fire is Charu (LE bandit captain with 27 hp) who has only just arrived for a week of relaxation, good food, and reading with his niece, Tansnyll (**commoner**), who he cherishes deeply. Charu wears a *ring of mind shielding* as well as a *medallion of thoughts* which he will use all three charges from to discreetly cast *detect thoughts* on the most threatening-looking characters. Though he pays them no mind and will claim to have no association with them, the 3 men in the corner are his personal bodyguards (LE **guards**) who will die before seeing any harm come to their boss. The tavern keeper (LE **thug** with 11 hp) has been a member of the thieves guild since its founding and is entrusted to oversee the Loose Noodle tavern. All of the Hollowfield Saints, including Charu, will be pleasant though reserved with the characters so as to not arouse suspicion.

Assassins. Outside, 5 assassins (**spies**), dressed as commoners and sent by a rival thieves guild boss, are approaching with the sole purpose of killing Charu. They will kill the dog with a poison dart after which one of them will enter through the front door, take a table between Charu and the exit, and make small talk with the characters to give their allies time to get into position. During this time, two of the remaining assassins will scale the outside walls and enter through the second level while the other two sneak in through the backdoor. Once the assassins are in position, they will attack hoping to have the element of surprise. They will die before they let Charu escape and are not opposed to killing every single person in the tavern starting with anyone who gets between them and their target.

Treasure

Charu carries 100 gp, wears ten silver rings set with assorted gems (500-1,000 gp each), and a diamond encrusted necklace (5,000 gp) which he keeps tucked beneath his shirt. In his room is a locked chest (DC 18 to open) containing 200 pp, a collection of 6 valuable fictional novels (50 gp each), and a *potion of superior healing*.

Scaling Guide

For a more challenging encounter, add 1 spy. For a truly deadly encounter, give each of the spies basic poison to apply to their daggers.

What's Next?

- If the assassins are successful, Tansnyll employs the characters to hunt them down and bring her their heads?
- If the characters save Charu, he extends to them one favor from the Hollowfield Saints thieves guild?
- If Charu survives, the guild employing the assassins puts out a reward for the heads of the characters?

QUEST MASTER TIPS

Combat Tip. The assassins are highly-skilled killers. Because of this, consider giving them proficiency in the Dexterity (Acrobatics) skill to allow them to climb up walls, swing from ceiling rafters, and flip over opponents or obstacles in order to reach their target. You might also consider describing the precision of their attacks as well as the damage done by them in detail to convey their extensive martial training.

Exploration Tip. While the Loose Noodle puts on the charade of being a public tavern, its primary role is to act as a safe house for the Hallowfield Saints. Because of this, consider having there be secret hatches scattered around the tavern containing hand crossbows, daggers, and potions as well as trapdoors leading to secret panic rooms for the party to discover.

Roleplaying Tip. Not all crime bosses and their thugs are as obvious as they tend to be in the movies. Consider playing the Hallowfield Saints as a direct counter to the stereotype. Perhaps Charu's love for poetry causes him to offer the party's bard a few extra gold pieces to recite his favorite

poems? Or perhaps one of the bodyguards is highly spiritual and wishes to speak with the party's cleric regarding some recent doubts he's been having with his faith? Doing so will make the encounter all the more memorable for your players while also possibly building a relationship with an interesting NPC should Charu survive the attack.

NPC PROFILES

CHARUVAT "CHARU" PAREKH

Personality Traits. I respect someone who is cultured far more than I do someone who is physically strong. I also love to share my poems with others to get their feedback.

Ideal. Power: The only way to get anything done in this world is to have people you trust working beneath you. (Lawful)

Bond. My niece is a prodigy when it comes to music, and I want nothing more than to see her succeed down that path.

Flaw. I hold grudges for life.

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 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +5, Wis +2

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The captain makes three mele 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.

REACTIONS

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.

SPY

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages any two languages

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turn, the spy can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, the spy deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the spy that isn't incapacitated and the spy doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The spy makes two melee attacks.

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

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.